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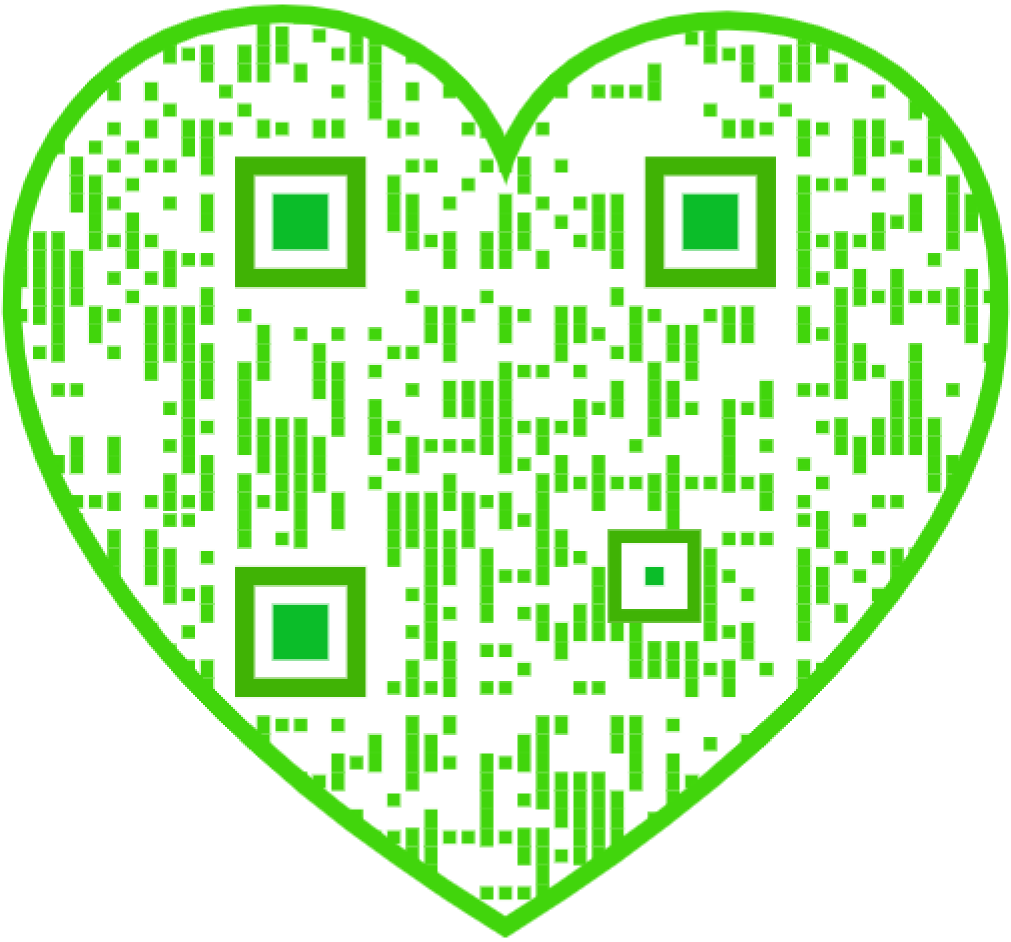
THE BEST NEW RESTAURANTS

11 SIZZLING SPOTS MAKING THEIR MARK ON THE CITY'S DINING SCENE

THE IRON-PRESSED MAITAKE MUSHROOM AT FIRE



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Bobby Barnes, General Manager of Innisbrook Golf Resort—host of the PGA Tour Valspar Championship—is

> **“I WOULD ENCOURAGE VISITORS TO COME AND DRIVE AROUND. YOU’D BE AMAZED AT SOME OF THE REALLY COOL BEACHES HERE.”**
>
> **BOBBY BARNES**
> *General Manager of Innisbrook Golf Resort*

a long-time resident with his own take on the best local beaches. “My favorite is Sunset Beach about 5 to 10 minutes from Innisbrook,” he says. “However, If you want to be where all of the action is, you can’t beat Clearwater Beach.” Among of the many styles of beachfront communities in the area, quiet, undisturbed locales appeal the most to Barnes. “There are a few places here that are really tranquil and laidback,” he says. “I would encourage visitors to come drive around and explore some of the cool little beach spots.”

With more than twenty years of experience in the industry, Barnes knows golf better than most. And to him, Innisbrook has courses like no other: “Our Copperhead course, where the PGA Tour event takes place, is special and unique because of the terrain,” Barnes says. “We have a lot of undulation and rolling hills that you typically don’t see in Florida.” Golfers may even get paid a visit by local wildlife: “A round at any of our courses might include appearances from alligators, fox squirrels, and different birds. You get a little bit of everything.”

Barnes says his perfect day would begin with a round of golf, then a visit to a small neighborhood beach, followed by a meal at one of the many local eateries. It’s an easy agenda for travelers to replicate on their own vacation, thanks to St. Pete-Clearwater’s abundance of outstanding dining options and unforgettable experiences.

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LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Bobby Barnes shares some of his favorite places to frequent

*“The **Sponge Docks** feature some of the finest Greek markets, restaurants and bakeries in the country.”*

*“One of Innisbrook’s restaurants, **Packard’s Steakhouse**, recently experienced a $4.5 million dollar renovation and rivals any upscale steakhouse in the area.”*

*“For seafood, **Mystic Fish** is a great hidden secret in Palm Harbor.”*

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Volume 73 ■ Number 4

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Bears cornerback
Jaylon Johnson

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Not Your Average Bear

Pro Bowler and NFL style icon Jaylon Johnson shows off this spring's top looks.

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THE BEST NEW RESTAURANTS

These 11 newcomers are making their mark on Chicago's dining scene with unexpected flavors and bold concepts.
By John Kessler

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THE AWAKENING

Karen Lewis's posthumous new memoir recounts the transformation of the Chicago Teachers Union into a disrupter of the status quo.

Photograph by DRAKE SWEENEY

DEPARTMENTS

CHIAPR

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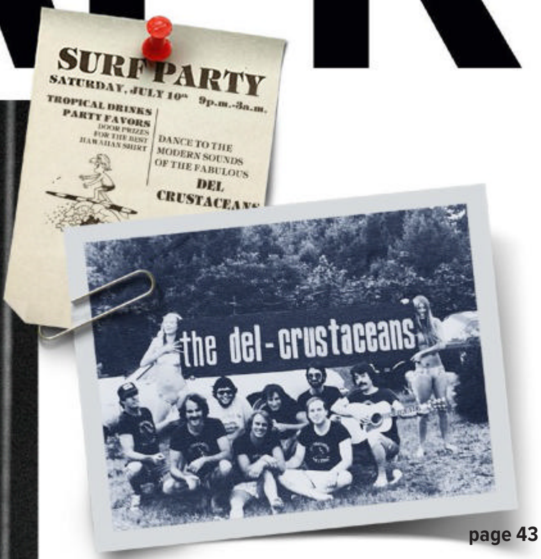
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FROM THE EDITOR

The Rise of the Middle

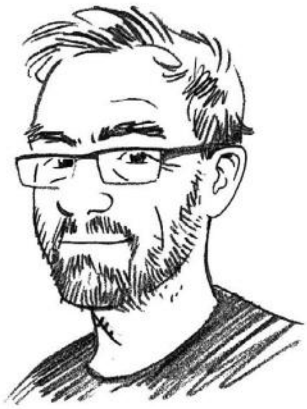
WHEN PEOPLE THINK OF CHICAGO’S CULINARY SCENE, THEY tend to think of the low and high epitomized by *The Bear*: Italian beef by day, Michelin-starred tasting menus by night. “That is still a big part of Chicago,” says our dining critic, John Kessler. But he adds that the middle ground between casual and fine dining is “starting to get way more interesting.”

The restaurants occupying that middle are beginning to drive the scene here, a shift reflected in Kessler’s rankings of Chicago’s top new spots (page 48). “Five years ago, it still would’ve been the influence of Grant Achatz and Charlie Trotter and the people who trained in their restaurants,” he says. “But we’re getting past that whole ‘center of modernist cuisine’ and ultrapremium high-end dining as defining us.”

So what *is* defining us? “Chefs who grew up eating in the city and were exposed to a lot of different foods are starting to put all that together.” Kessler points to his top two, Maxwells Trading and Mariscos San Pedro, as examples of this inventiveness. Of the latter, he says: “Yes, it’s a Mexican marisquería, but the chefs there also look at what they like to eat. If you’re going to have a tostada with raw tuna on it, which is a totally Mexican thing, what’s to stop you from putting on some sushi-quality sea urchin? It’s fusion, but not in the old way. It’s not based on a concept. It’s based on the way people are actually eating, and that’s what’s making Chicago cool.”

Terrance Noland
Editor in Chief

INSIDE PEEK



A Return to Berlin

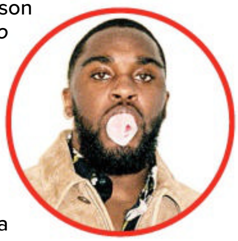
JASON LUTES SPENT 22 YEARS DRAWING scenes from Weimar Germany for his comic book series that culminated in his 2018 graphic novel, *Berlin*. For our piece on Court Theatre’s adaptation (page 27), we had him create one more to serve as a backdrop for the show’s creators. That’s how director Charles Newell and playwright Mickle Maher came to be standing at a desk in front of the Brandenburg Gate, as depicted by the Vermont-based artist (whose self-portrait is above) in his trademark black and white. “I literally have not drawn Berlin since 2018,” says Lutes, “so it was fun to revisit it.”

–WEB BEHRENS

ADDING SOME POP

To inject a bit of whimsy into our fashion feature with the Bears’ Jaylon Johnson (page 74), *Chicago* design director David Syrek and photographer Drake Sweeney turned to chewing gum. They gave Johnson some Hubba Bubba and asked him to put three pieces in his mouth and blow the biggest bubble he could. Johnson delivered (page 79).

–KIM VAZQUEZ



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BELLY UP TO BAR TRE DITA, ONE OF OUR 10 FAVORITES

Bisous is dope.

@raezzat92
via Instagram

Tippling Favorites

I stayed at the St. Regis last night and had an incredible cocktail and snacks at Bar Tre Dita [“Best New Bars,” February]. Such a nice addition to the city.

@not_that_old_chestnut *via Instagram*

Electric Funeral holding it down for the South Side!
@monochromebrew
via Instagram

THE TOP PROSECUTOR
Eileen O’Neill Burke feels like the needle we’ve been trying to thread [“The New Face of Law and Order,” February]. You can hold people accountable for serious crimes and bring back fear of consequences while also trying to give people a chance to fix past mistakes.
@pa_tall *via X*

I didn’t pay much attention to this race, admittedly, but Burke seems like a pretty interesting person.
@Eric_Erins *via X*

A disgusting puff piece covering for lawlessness in the disguise of a moderate. Sigh. So over this garbage.
@Saveourrepubli3 *via X*

A PHOTOGRAPHER WHO STAYS CLOSE TO HOME
This photo essay [“Mi Familia,” February] brought tears to my eyes. Such a beautiful family so lovingly portrayed by an amazing artist.
@johnmcd204 *via X*

MIKKI SPEAKS, AGAIN
Loved this [Backroom: Mikki Kendall, February]! Totally agree on the Michelle Obama reference.
@leyssallenne *via X*

If you think I sound less hinged than expected, you don’t understand Chicago girls.
@karnythia (Mikki Kendall)
via X

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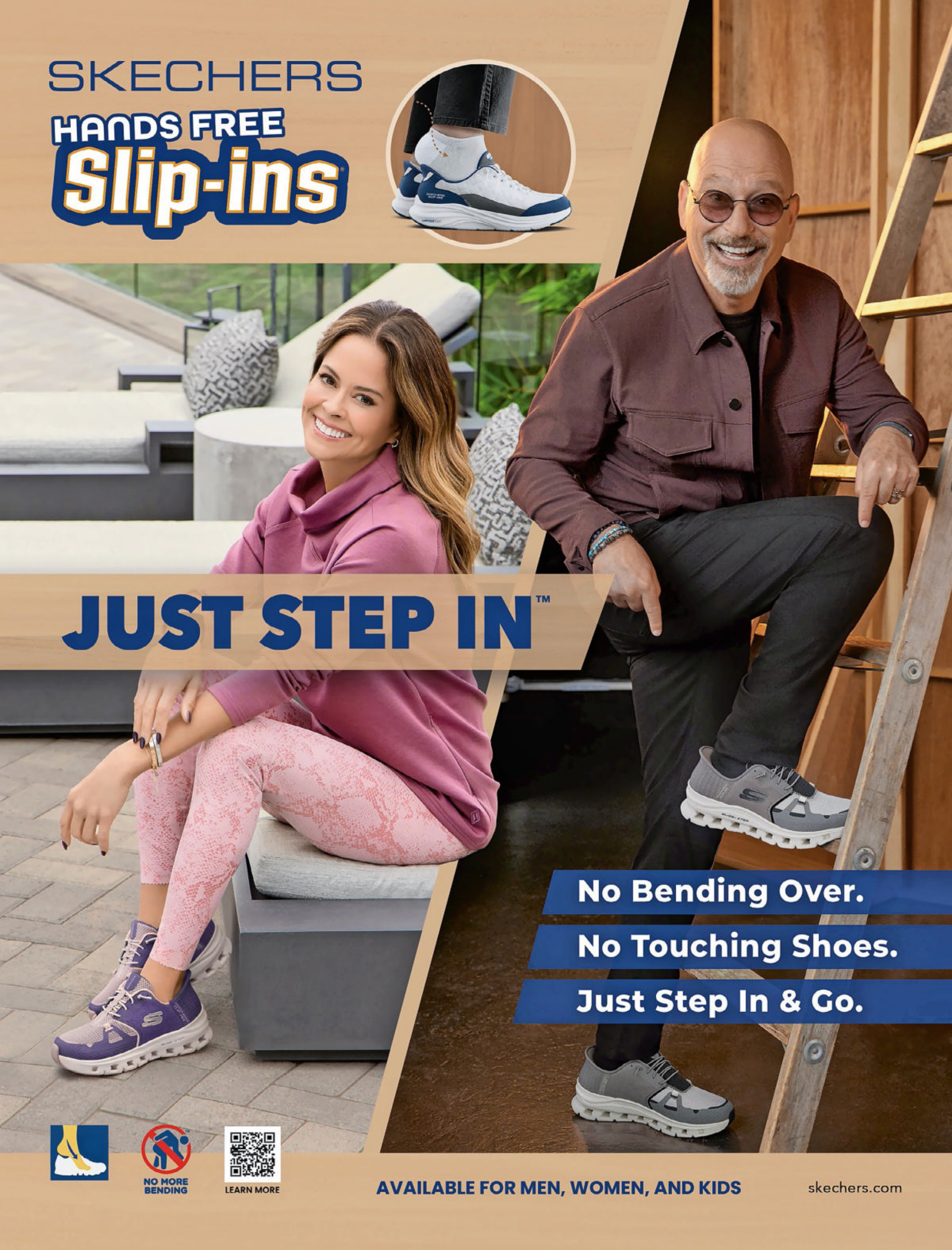
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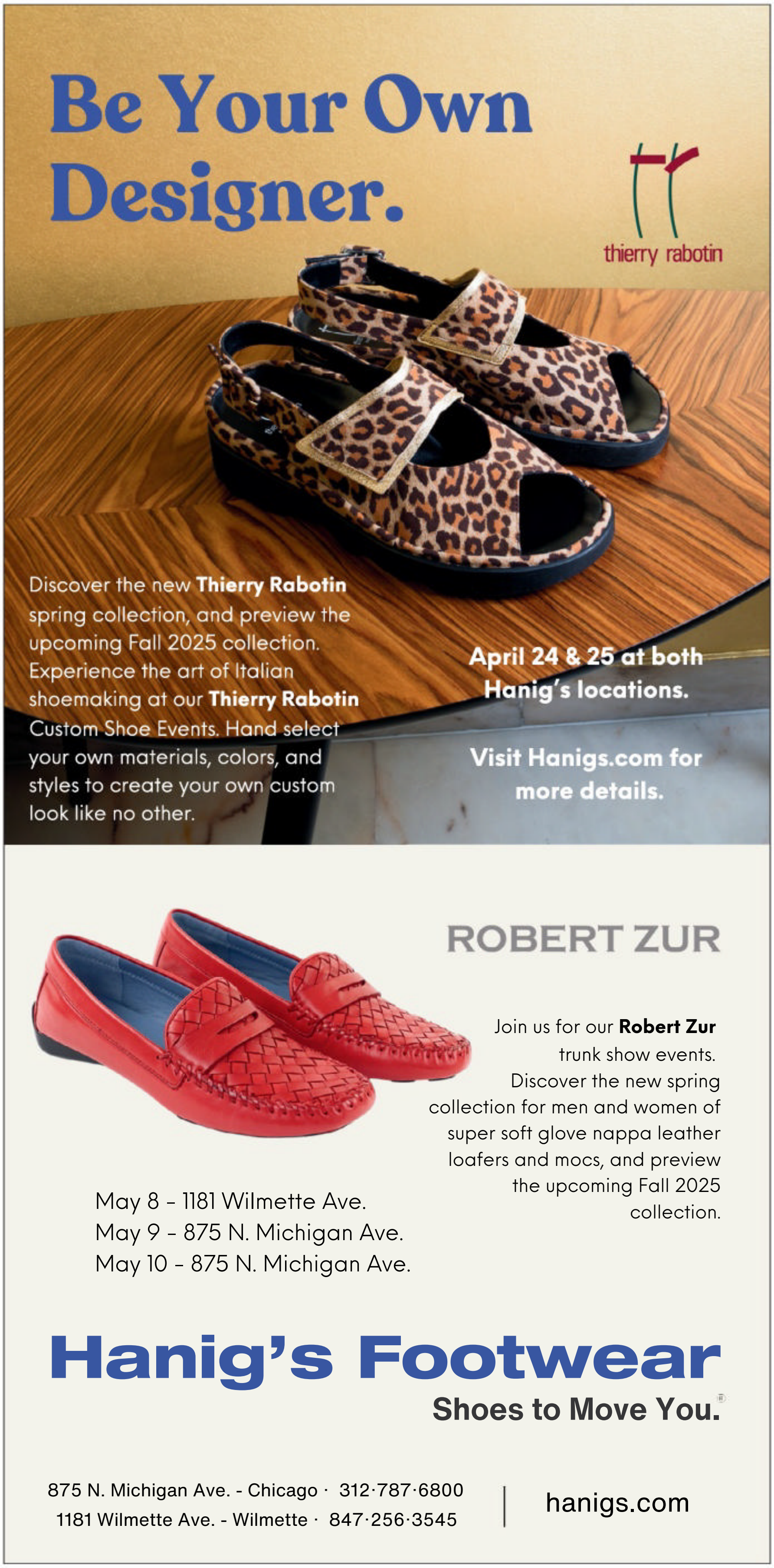

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Q:

What is the highest point in Chicago?

CITY OF BIG QUESTIONS

ANSWERED BY EDWARD MCCLELLAND

As everybody knows, the highest point on which a person can stand in Chicago is Willis Tower's Skydeck, which, at 1,353 feet up, offers a view of Michigan, on the other side of the lake. But where is the highest natural point in the city?

According to "A History of Beverly Hills, Chicago," a 1926 University of Chicago thesis by Cora DeGrass Heinemann, that Far South Side neighborhood, which now goes by Beverly, "is the highest land in Cook County." That's because the Blue Island Ridge, a glacial moraine, winds through it.

In the Dan Ryan Woods, a forest preserve that adjoins Beverly to the north, a historical marker for Lookout Point says the spot was "used as a signal station on [the] main highway of Indian travel." Lookout Point offers a fine view of downtown Chicago, but at 660 feet above sea level, it's not quite the highest spot in the city. That's a little farther south, at 91st Street between Claremont and Western, where the land rises to 670 feet.

By contrast, the city's lowest point, the lakefront, is at 577 feet. The lesson here: With less than 100 feet between its highest and lowest elevations, Chicago is one flat city. Still, even a flat city has its peaks.

Send your questions about the Chicago area to emcclelland@chicagomag.com.

ILLUSTRATION: GREG CLARKE

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THE 312

Daniel Biss

Talking Points

This month's conversation starters

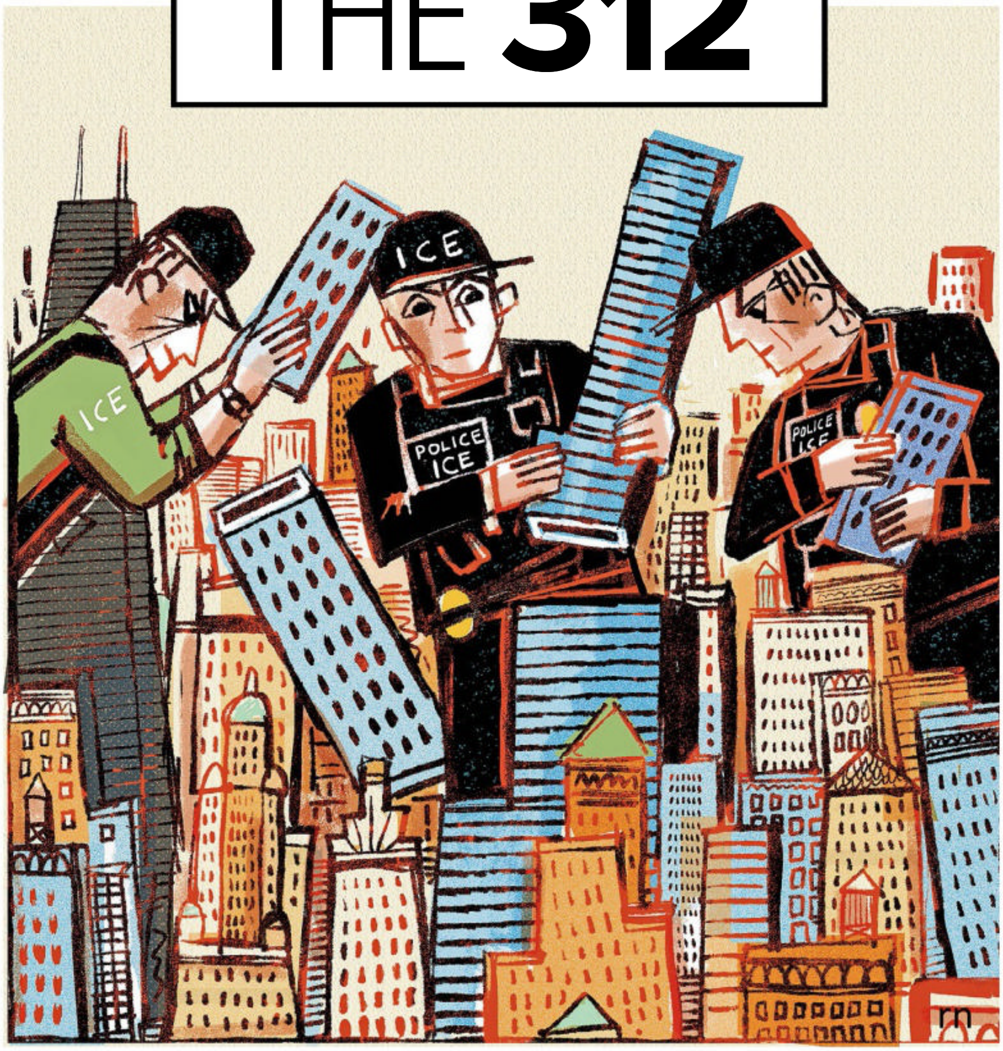
1 April 1 is **election day in the suburbs**. In Evanston, Daniel Biss is running for a second term as mayor, the job he took after losing to JB Pritzker for governor. And Dolton will replace scandal magnet Tiffany Henyard, booted in the primary.

2 The **National Public Housing Museum** opens April 4 in Little Italy. Among exhibits: a look at the displacement of people who once lived where the museum now stands. Very meta.

3 **Tina Fey and Amy Poehler**, who started at Second City, are back in town April 6 for standup at the Rosemont Theatre. "If this tour goes right, we can finally end this friendship," they're saying.

4 It's bad enough the Cubs had to open at "home" in Tokyo against the defending champ Dodgers. Now the **North Siders face a brutal April**: 14 of 24 games are against 2024 playoff teams—five versus L.A.; six, the Padres; three, the Phillies.

PHOTOGRAPH: SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES



Seeking Sanctuary

Despite Chicago's determination to protect immigrants from Trump's deportation efforts, the city is limited in what it can do. By BEN AUSTEN

ON A FEBRUARY SATURDAY IN LITTLE VILLAGE, SEVERAL HUNDRED PEOPLE GATHered in the numbing cold to protest the Trump administration's targeting of Chicago and its immigrant communities. Incidents of federal agents in unmarked cars pulling up to take undocumented residents away and a Justice Department lawsuit trying to force the city and state to cooperate in such raids were generating growing terror in Latino neighborhoods. The ralliers hoisted signs that read "No Mass Deportations," "Fuera ICE," and "Trump: Somos Trabajadores, No Delincuentes" (Trump: We Are Workers, Not Criminals).

Chicago bills itself as a "sanctuary city" for undocumented immigrants, with rules that prohibit local officials from assisting in federal deportation efforts. Mayor Harold Washington first designated Chicago as one in 1985, and the policy has been amended and strengthened since, most significantly in 2012, when it was codified as the Welcoming City Ordinance. Among other things, Chicago police are largely restricted from helping U.S. Immigration and Customs

Illustration by ROBERT NEUBECKER

Enforcement identify, arrest, or remove undocumented immigrants.

But many immigrant advocates believe the term "sanctuary" is inaccurate and counterproductive, overstating what the law actually does and making the city a target for what President Donald Trump is vowing will be "the largest deportation program of criminals" in U.S. history. "The Trump administration is leaning on that term to suggest that Chicago is harboring or somehow blocking ICE from doing its enforcement, and that's just not how these laws operate," says Mark Fleming, who, as associate director of litigation at the National Immigrant Justice Center, helped write and defend such legislation.

Under Chicago's Welcoming City law, local officials aren't allowed to inquire about or investigate a person's immigration status, at least in most cases. Police also can't arrest or detain someone solely for being in the country illegally. ICE is still free to conduct immigration enforcement in the city, and the ordinance does not stop Chicago police from cooperating with the agency in criminal matters, such as when a judge issues a criminal warrant. The way ICE typically operates, it asks local law enforcement around the country to detain those suspected of violating civil immigration laws for up to 48 hours beyond their scheduled release, which gives federal agents time to pick them up. Chicago refuses to participate in this practice.

"The federal government doesn't have any authority to command local subnational governments to assist with its own agenda, and if they do, that's called commandeering," says Martha Davis, a constitutional law professor at Northeastern University. Adds Fleming: "The nonparticipation laws by state and local law enforcement do present real protections."

That's partly because of manpower. ICE has only a few thousand deputized agents across the country. In a show of force earlier this year, ICE agents, joined by other federal officers, rounded up about 100 people in Chicago and delivered them to detention centers. If Trump intends to follow through on his threat to carry out mass deportations – what could amount to tens of thousands of Chicago residents – he'll need more boots on the ground. Trump has brought up deploying federal troops in cities, ostensibly by invoking the Insurrection Act of 1807, but that would be an extreme measure.

Many immigrant advocates believe the term "sanctuary" is inaccurate and counterproductive, overstating what the law does and making the city a target.

If Chicago were in a Republican-dominated state, it might be a "welcoming city" in name only. States legally have far more authority over their own municipalities than the federal government does. But Chicago's policies are bolstered by the 2017 Illinois Trust Act, which also prohibits state operators from collaborating with ICE.

That isn't to say Chicago's bulwarks are impenetrable. ICE, for instance, can identify some undocumented immigrants here through law enforcement backchannels. When Chicago police officers make an arrest, they upload fingerprints to an FBI database to check for outstanding warrants and criminal history. A 2008 law gave ICE full access to FBI data, and it can match the fingerprints with any immigration records in its own system and use that information to make arrests.

Trump is also trying to coerce local compliance by holding over Chicago's head the billions of dollars in federal grants that the city receives each year to help pay for law enforcement, mass transit, and roads. During his first term, Trump's attempt to withhold funding was thwarted by a federal judge, who ruled that such efforts were a form of commandeering and, as such, violated the Constitution. That legal battle was never entirely resolved, though: An appeal reached the Supreme Court but was eventually dropped by the Justice Department after President Joe Biden took office. That leaves some legal wiggle room for Trump's administration.

And of course, the laws themselves could change. A bill called the No Bailout for Sanctuary Cities Act stalled in Congress last year but is again coming up for a vote. If passed, that law would make cities such as Chicago ineligible for federal grants that are used to benefit residents without legal status.

In Chicago, several community organizations have tried to parry such attacks, filing their own lawsuit against the federal government, arguing that Trump's targeting of the city and its sanctuary law is itself in violation of the First Amendment and other legal protections. (They dropped their suit in late February.) Sheila Bedi, who represented the groups through Northwestern University's Community Justice and Civil Rights Clinic, says the Trump administration is making a spectacle of Chicago and other blue cities not because of legitimate concerns about crime but in order to silence dissent.

All this is happening at a moment when Chicago's appetite for resistance appears less robust than it was during Trump's first term. Texas's busing here of some 50,000 migrants from Venezuela and other Latin American countries, almost all of them in need of essential services, created tension between Black and immigrant communities over the best use of city resources. As Trump invariably applies more pressure, those cracks could continue to grow. Or the increased attacks could backfire, galvanizing a resistance. Chicagoans, after all, don't much like being pushed around. ▣

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VOX

Change of Sox

Can new manager **Will Venable** rescue the White Sox after a disastrous season?

Interview by MARK BAZER

NOTHING CAN PREPARE you for managing the White Sox, a team that last season – stop me if you've heard this – set the modern era Major League Baseball record for losses, with 121. But Will Venable, the team's new manager, may be as ready as anyone to help this franchise reverse course. The former outfielder (he played nine seasons in the majors, mostly with the Padres) and Princeton grad (where basketball was his primary sport) is no stranger to Chicago: He was a Cubs coach from 2018 through 2020. For the past two seasons, he was second in command for the Texas Rangers, including for their 2023 World Series title.

He grew up in an athletic family. His dad, Max, played in the majors and internationally before becoming a minor-league coach. For good measure, Will's younger brother, Winston, played for the Bears in his one NFL season.

Q: Last season — and this is a big understatement — was a tough one for the White Sox. Beyond getting the chance to manage for the first time, what makes you excited about this particular job?

A: There's my history with Chicago and my family's love for Chicago. I don't think there's a better place to be in the summer. And playing the White Sox last summer – obviously, the wins weren't there, but I recognized a group that went out and continued to compete in the face of adversity. Then going through the interview process, getting to understand not just [general manager] Chris Getz's vision but the foundational pieces that were important to him, I was really excited that he called to offer me the job.

Q: For the players from last year's team who are still around, how much do you want them to forget what happened? Or do you want them to hold on to that?

A: It depends on where it gets you. Certainly there is a desire to move on, but a lot of these guys are using it as motivation to make sure it doesn't happen again. These

Photograph by CLAYTON HAUCK

> **“Certainly there is a desire to move on [from last year], but a lot of these guys are using it as motivation.”**

are prideful guys, they’re proud of the logo. And the thing that changes the narrative the quickest is winning baseball games.

Q: You majored in anthropology at Princeton. Did studying how people from various cultures behave help inform how you approach coaching and deal with players?

A: One hundred percent. And not just that – my experience as a kid with my dad playing and coaching took us all over the world. To be able to immerse yourself in different cultures was awesome growing up, and then I got to study and think about that on a deeper level in college. In baseball, you walk into a locker room with guys from every part of the world, and we all have to figure out how to communicate. It helps to understand that people have different perspectives and different needs.

Q: One place you spent time growing up is Japan, where your dad played. What is the Japanese baseball experience like?

A: My dad played in Japan when I was in fourth and fifth grade. It was amazing. Very passionate fans, very, very loud in those ballparks. And I actually got to play Little League there, which was a very cool part of my life. The coach would pick me up and we’d be practicing all day long, playing games, doing drills. It’s no wonder that Japanese players come here and are really good players and fundamentally sound.

Q: As global and diverse as Major League Baseball is now, the number of African American players is way down from what it once was. Is that personal for you?

A: It is. Certainly I understand what it means broadly for the game – and hope that’s not the same narrative five or 10 years from now. But also, you know, my dad was a coach in the minor leagues for 20 years and never got the opportunity to coach in the majors. He coached me in the minors, and I know what his skill set is. He’s every bit of a major-league coach. And so I take that experience into this opportunity.

Q: Did you feel pressure growing up to do well in baseball because of your dad? Or did your dad apply pressure on you?

A: I don’t know that you could have had less pressure on a kid than I had. I think that helped me in my career. Going into my senior year of high school, I was really committed to just playing basketball, and I thought to be the best basketball player, I couldn’t also play baseball. That was an easy three-minute conversation with my dad. He said, “OK, how can you be the best basketball player that *you* want to be?”

Q: What was winning the World Series like? It’s been a while here.

A: It’s one of those things that when you’re in it, it’s exhausting and draining. I couldn’t even imagine, as a player, continuing to play that deep into the season. We [the coaches] reflected on it a lot, and everyone had the same response: This is a great experience looking back, but it wasn’t that fun going through it.

Q: Do you have favorite Chicago restaurants from your time coaching with the Cubs?

A: It was local spots in, like, Lincoln Park. And then it was the COVID season and that summer where you couldn’t go out to eat. So then it was really about just getting on a Divvy bike and going down to the lake and sitting by the water and just enjoying the lake. Now, with the kids, we’re spending less time doing the mom-and-dad-going-out-to-dinner. Our pool of restaurants has changed a bit. It might be more American Girl Cafe.

Q: You have three young daughters. Do your daughters understand what you do?

A: They get it a little bit. The last couple years in Texas when we tried to explain what my job is, my wife came up with that [Rangers manager Bruce] Bochy was like Batman and I was Robin. And so when we were describing this new job, we told them that I’m, you know, like Batman.

FARM REPORT

The good news for Sox fans? Help is on the way. ESPN ranks the team’s minor-league system No. 2 in baseball. Here are three prospects to be (cautiously) excited about.

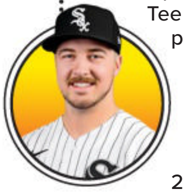
NOAH SCHULTZ

The 6-foot-9 hard-throwing lefty pitcher, who was born in Naperville and played at Oswego East High School, is already drawing comparisons to Randy Johnson—though, to our knowledge, he’s yet to kill a bird with one of his fastballs. Schultz, the No. 16–rated prospect in baseball, played most of last season for the Double-A Birmingham Barons, where he was named Southern League Pitcher of the Year. If the Sox need pitching help at some point this season—and let’s face it, they will—expect the 21-year-old Schultz to get called up.

HAGEN SMITH

You can never have too much good pitching—particularly good lefty pitching. And the Sox are stocking up. Drafted fifth overall in 2024, Smith, 21, pitched for the University of Arkansas for the past three seasons, including a junior year when he posted gaudy numbers: a 2.04 ERA and 161 strikeouts in just 84 innings. White Sox GM Chris Getz has said that Smith, too, may wind up in Chicago in the “very near future.”

KYLE TEEL



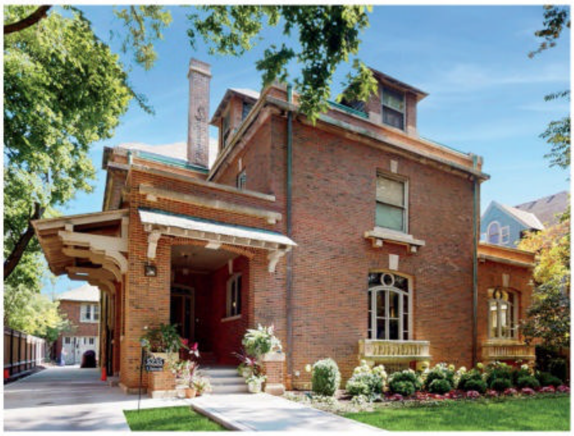
If trading Garrett Crochet, the team’s best starting pitcher last year, to the Red Sox is going to pan out, a lot rides on Teel. Considered the most promising of the four prospects the White Sox got in return, the 23-year-old catcher was drafted out of the University of Virginia in 2023, after being named Atlantic Coast Conference Baseball Player of the Year. Last season, his first full one in the minors, he showed he could hit for average on the pro level while providing a little power. – M.B.

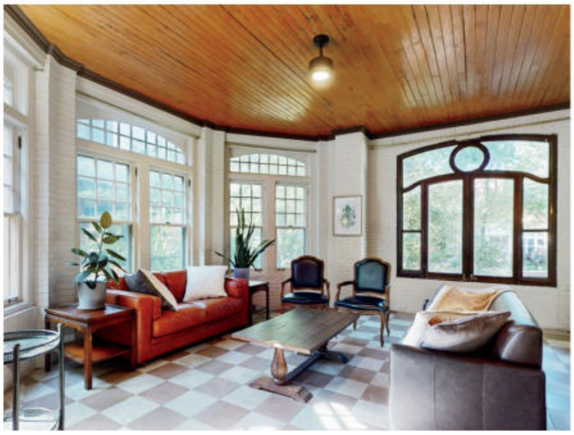
PHOTOGRAPHY: CHICAGO WHITE SOX

LISTING OF THE MONTH

Top of the Class

This Hyde Park home has magna cum laude written all over it. By THOMAS CONNORS





FOR SOME FOLKS, NOTHING can match the glory of college, when "the big game" was all that mattered and the shenanigans of dorm life were deemed high comedy. In some ways, architect James Gamble Rogers never left campus. The Yale grad designed multiple buildings for his alma mater, as well as for Northwestern University, including the Deering Library and the recently demolished Ryan Field. While institutions were his primary clients, his portfolio included a number of fine houses, such as the former Playboy mansion on North State Parkway and the substantial home at 5235 South University Avenue in Hyde Park, fittingly styled as Collegiate Gothic and now on the market for $3.1 million.

Built in 1904 for Hunter Woodis Finch, who owned a coal company, the property was later the home of University of Chicago quantum chemist Clemens C.J. Roothaan, who died in 2019 at 100. A concentration camp survivor, Roothaan was renowned in his field for developing a model for computing the structures of atoms and molecules.

After all these years, the house retains its charm and impressive detailing. There are multiple handsomely tiled fireplaces, including one in the primary bathroom, and a wonderfully old-school butler's pantry, with a sink and built-in cupboards. Every room is amply scaled, from the massive wood-paneled reception hall to each of the seven bedrooms. The dining room, outfitted with three chandeliers, is just under 500 square feet, and the bookcase-lined living room tops 500. In addition to an extensive brick patio in the back, the residence features a first-floor sunroom and terrace. The separate garage houses a two-bedroom apartment on its second floor. It all adds up. Roomy inside and out, this onetime professor's pad seems a sure-fire formula for fine living. C

MY TOWN
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RESIDENT **MIKE ADKESSON**, HEAD OF BROOKFIELD ZOO CHICAGO, RECOMMENDS THESE FOUR SPOTS.

> THE FORGE: LEMONT QUARRIES

"My wife and I love to go to this huge outdoor adventure park along the I&M Canal with our three kids. The climbing area is especially great, because it's got something for every skill and bravery level. The outdoor concerts are a bonus." *227 Heritage Quarries Dr.*

> THREE STORIES BOOKS

"Our local children's bookstore is a gem. My kids always find something from the impressive selection. And they love the art activities after school and on weekends, themed to holidays or a character." *310 Canal St.*

> SAGAWAU CANYON NATURE PRESERVE

"It has terrain that's unique for the Midwest, with some nice hills. We hike and visit the great nature center. It's on our bucket list to try cross-country skiing there." *12545 111th St.*

> 3 CORNERS GRILL & TAP

"It's a cute, locally owned spot. We go for the smash burgers and Tater Tots. There's an outdoor patio we like in the summer." *12371 Derby Rd.*

–INTERVIEW BY JUDY SUTTON TAYLOR

PHOTOGRAPHY: (HOUSE) VHT STUDIOS; (ADKESSON) BROOKFIELD ZOO

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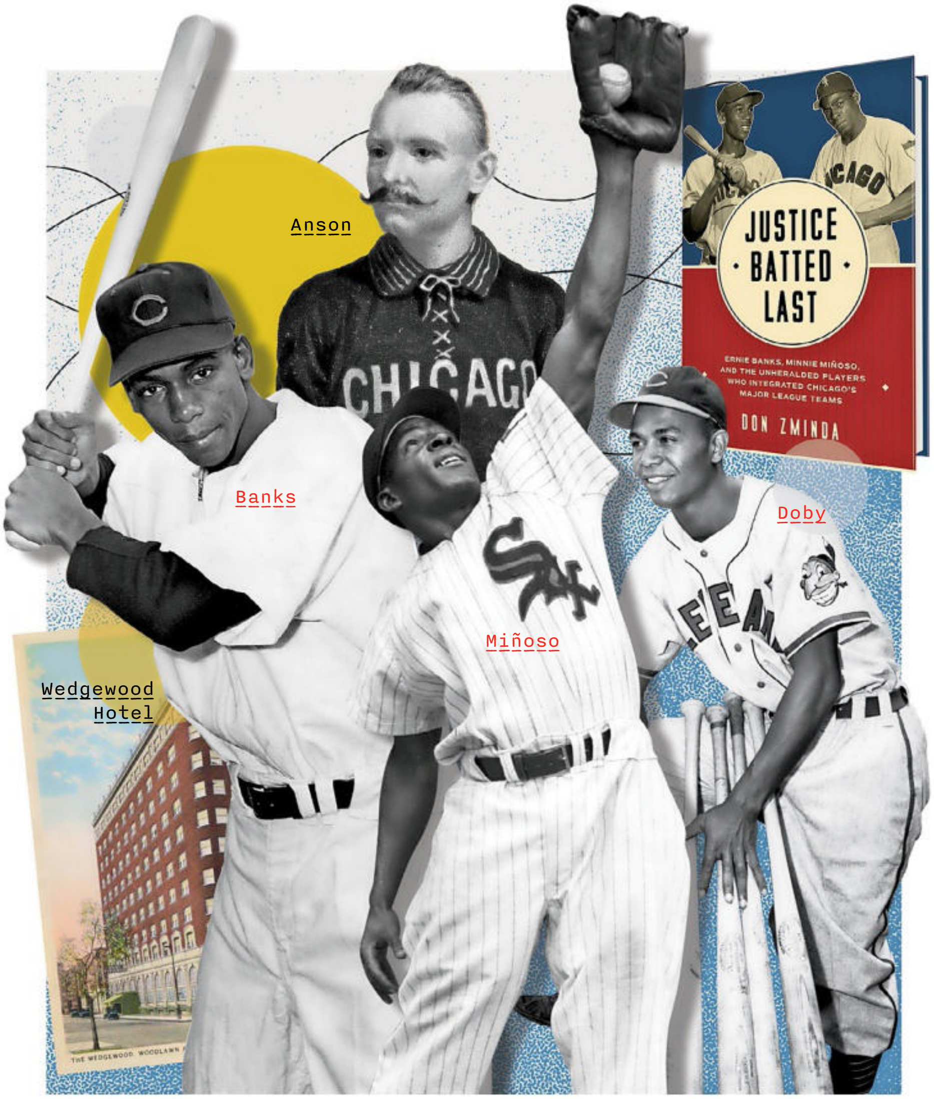
FIVE THINGS

Ernie, Minnie … and Charles?

A new book highlights Chicago's pivotal role in both upholding and breaking baseball's color barrier. Here's what we learned. By EDWARD McCLELLAND


Anson
Banks
Miñoso
Doby
Wedgewood
Hotel
JUSTICE BATTED LAST
ERNIE BANKS, MINNIE MIÑOSO, AND THE UNHERALDED PLAYERS WHO INTEGRATED CHICAGO'S MAJOR LEAGUE TEAMS
DON ZMINDA

1 Black baseball in Chicago dates back to the mid-19th century.
"The most notable of the early teams, the Chicago Blue Stockings, played and often beat white opponents during the 1870s, though they were denied admission to the state's Senior Amateur Championship tournament," baseball historian Don Zminda writes in *Justice Batted Last: Ernie Banks, Minnie Miñoso, and the Unheralded Players Who Integrated Chicago's Major League Teams*. The Chicago Unions, formed in the late 1880s, "dominated the amateur baseball scene in Chicago," he quotes historian Leslie Heaphy as saying, and in 1895 they took two of three games from one of the city's best white semipro teams.

2 A couple of Chicagoans played a key part in keeping Blacks out of the majors.
Cap Anson, the superstar player-manager of the Chicago White Stockings, the precursor to the Cubs, threatened to not let his team play a Toledo squad that had a Black catcher, Moses Fleetwood Walker. Walker, one of the few players of color in white organized baseball at the time, was forced to sit out the game. Anson later helped derail attempts by the New York Giants to sign Walker and another Black player. There wasn't another Black player in the white major leagues for 63 years, until Jackie Robinson in 1947. That absence was in no small part because of the influence of Kenesaw Mountain Landis, who had been a Chicago federal judge. Though Landis stated publicly that there was no rule that a player be white, the color line was strictly enforced during his time as baseball commissioner, from 1920 to his death in 1944.

3 An East Hyde Park hotel refused to lodge the American League's first Black player.
When Cleveland's Larry Doby made his historic debut in July 1947, for a game in Chicago against the White Sox, he wasn't allowed to stay with his teammates at the stylish Hotel Del Prado, in what was then an almost exclusively white area. "The Indians had to scramble to find a 'Black hotel' for Doby," Zminda writes. One place in town that catered to Black athletes, including boxing champ Joe Louis, was Woodlawn's Wedgewood Hotel, partly owned by track legend Jesse Owens. It later served as the residence of the White Sox's Minnie Miñoso.

4 Minnie Miñoso ended up on the White Sox because he had been on a team said to have too many Black players.
Miñoso, the first Black player for either of the Chicago teams, was originally signed by Cleveland in 1948, but the general manager of the White Sox, Frank Lane, was able to obtain him in a trade in 1951 because the Indians were *too* integrated. "The Indians can't keep Miñoso," an anonymous major-league executive told the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* at the time. "They've got all the colored players they can handle."

5 The Cubs signed a Black player before the Sox did but took longer to integrate their major-league roster.
In 1949, the Cubs assigned Charles Pope, a catcher from San Francisco, to their low-level minor-league affiliate in Visalia, California. But despite hitting a respectable .286, Pope was released that June and never played in the big leagues. Not until 1953 did the Cubs integrate their major-league roster by signing Ernie Banks out of the Negro Leagues and calling up Gene Baker, who had languished in the minors for four seasons. Banks played his first game September 17, three days before Baker, who was recovering from an injury.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (BANKS, MIÑOSO) *CHICAGO TRIBUNE*; (ANSON) LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; (BOOK) UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS; (DOBY) AP

Photo illustration by ELIZABETH CARLISLE

DR. JASON ROBIN

DEDICATION HEALTH

For over a decade, Dr. Jason Robin has been recognized by his peers as a Top Cardiologist in Chicago Magazine. A lifelong Chicagoan, he continues the legacy of his family of physicians who have served the city for generations.

Dr. Robin graduated with highest honors from Rush Medical College and completed his residency, chief residency and cardiology fellowship at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Board-certified in cardiology, nuclear cardiology, echocardiography, and cardio-oncology, he developed and directed nationally acclaimed programs in Cardio-Oncology and Sports Cardiology. He treats the full spectrum of cardiovascular disease, from primary prevention to complex cardiomyopathies, and has cared for tens of thousands of patients including athletes from the Northwestern Wildcats and Chicago Fire.

Dr. Robin's approach is personalized, immediate attention. His transition to Dedication Health, a concierge practice in Chicago's North Shore, allows him to address delays in traditional healthcare that lead to stress and missed diagnoses. This model with 24/7 access enables him to thoroughly understand patients' concerns, deliver rapid access to state-of-the-art diagnostics, provide prompt, accurate results, and the care needed to return to their lives.

"My goal has always been to deliver the newest, most cutting-edge therapies while having the patient-doctor relationships of old. For me, every patient is family" – Dr. Jason Robin

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THE REGIMEN

Yazan Koudsi

Instagram globetrotter, electrolyte craver, yogi with a party side

By KELLY AIGLON

HE DOESN'T MEAN TO BRAG, but Yazan Koudsi knew Bali was cool before you did. Working as a flight attendant for Emirates a decade ago, the Syrian native began posting videos of the island's nature and nightlife to Instagram. "Some of them went viral," says Koudsi, 35. "Then I really became travel obsessed." Koudsi, who lives in Lake View, has since turned in his wings and works full-time creating videos of his adventures around town and in Puerto Rico, where he just bought a condo, and elsewhere in the world. When not creating content (he now has 2.2 million followers), he stays fits with a combo of yoga, hiking, and dancing with his friends: "Whenever I need a boost, I call them. It solves everything."

HYDRATION ENRICHMENT
"Drinking plain water is not enough for me to feel hydrated. I need electrolytes. So I put salt and lemon in my water. When I drink it, my brain is happy, I have more energy, and my skin is better. I also like mixing coconut water, cucumber, lemon juice, mint, and pineapple."

PARK GOALS
"I'm trying to hike as many national parks as I can. I did 18 miles at Zion National Park in Utah. The Angels Landing Trail is insane. For the last mile you're on an edge with both sides open, walking on chains. I used to be afraid of heights and decided to face that fear."

HEATING UP
"I got really into hot yoga at CorePower. When I have energy, I do sculpt. When I want to relax, I do hot fusion. But any yoga relaxes me. I'll even do it when hiking: I put my phone on a tripod and do standing yoga in the middle of nature. It reminds me to be present."

LET'S DANCE
"At the gym, I love Zumba. And when I go out, it's to clubs. I like the big DJs, like Marshmello. I'm a night owl and a very happy person. Dancing fits with all that."

REST ASSURED
"I tried to be a morning person. I couldn't do it. I need eight hours of sleep, no more and no less. If I get to bed at 3 a.m., I wake up at 11 a.m. I have these nighttime rituals, like using an eye massager from Renpho. It has heat and massages my eyes and head. It's the best relaxation. There's even the option to have bird sounds."

PHOTOGRAPHY: (COCONUT) EVERYDAY BETTER TO DO EVERYTHING YOU LOVE/GETTY IMAGES; (PINEAPPLE) BERGAMONT/GETTY; (MINT) MARAT MUSABIROV/GETTY

Photograph by JEFF SCIORTINO

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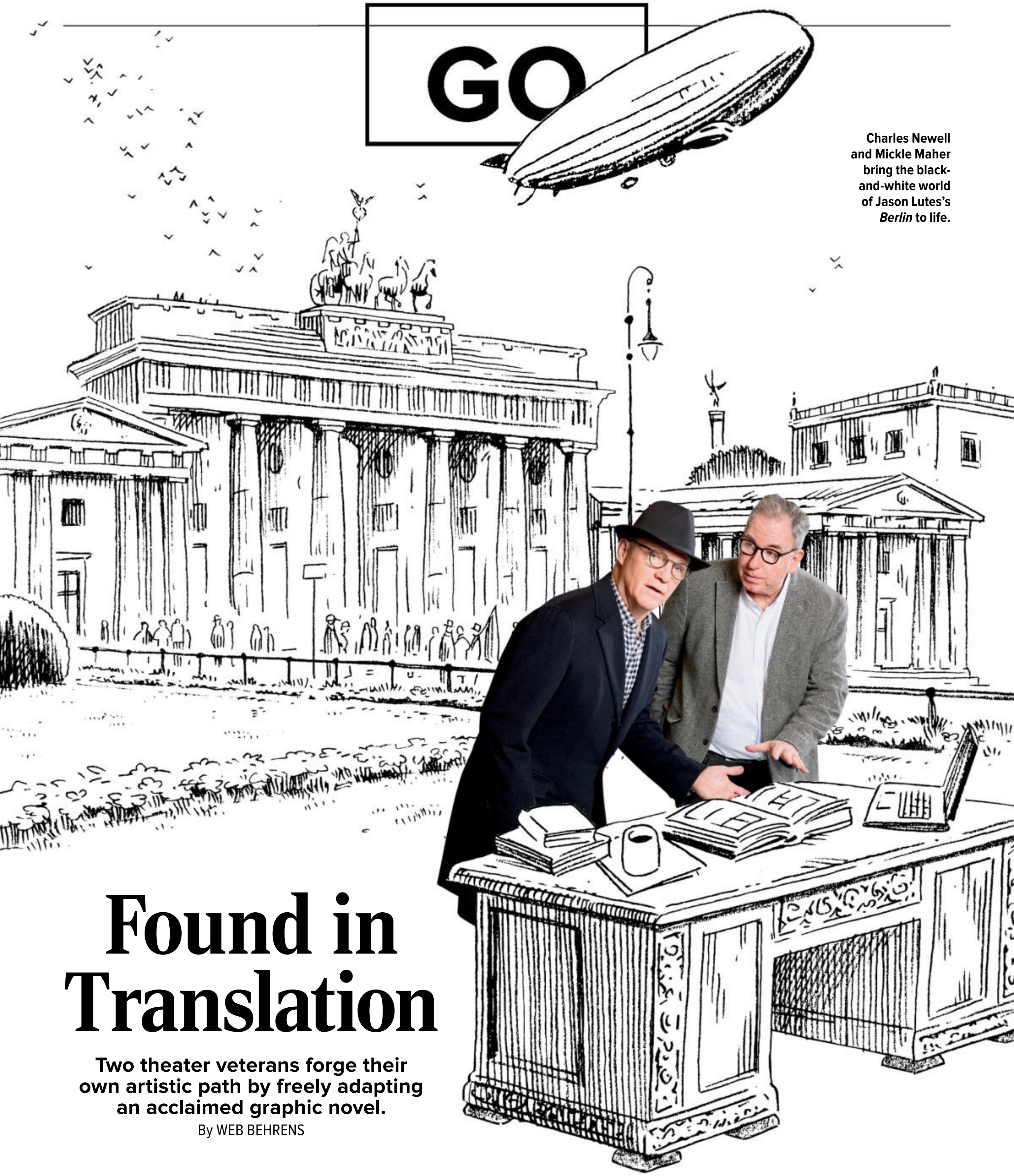
Images, top to bottom: Floor detail, Library. Ceiling covering detail, Drawing Room. Photo credit: Alex Brescanu.



Charles Newell and Mickle Maher bring the black-and-white world of Jason Lutes's *Berlin* to life.

Found in Translation

Two theater veterans forge their own artistic path by freely adapting an acclaimed graphic novel.

By WEB BEHRENS

Illustration by JASON LUTES | Photograph by SAVERIO TRUGLIA

I LOVE TAKING ON PROJECTS that seem impossible, that stretch me and all of the artists involved,” declares Charles Newell. Sitting next to playwright Mickle Maher, the director brims with enthusiasm while mulling an audacious creative frontier: Court Theatre’s spring production, *Berlin*, which runs April 19 to May 11. A timely world premiere, it’s set during the chaotic years when Hitler rose to power and Germany slowly goose-stepped into Nazi fascism.

But it’s not the subject matter that’s causing the artistic stretch. It’s the act of adaptation – which says a lot, because both men are known for reinterpreting classic texts over their lengthy careers. Newell, 66, stepped down last summer as Court’s artistic director; among the achievements of his 30-year tenure is the company’s 2022 Regional Theatre Tony Award. Meanwhile, 62-year-old Maher’s plays have been performed worldwide; locally, he cofounded Theater Oobleck and teaches playwriting at the University of Chicago (where the Court resides). So what project could get these seasoned pros excited to twist themselves into more knots than a German pretzel?

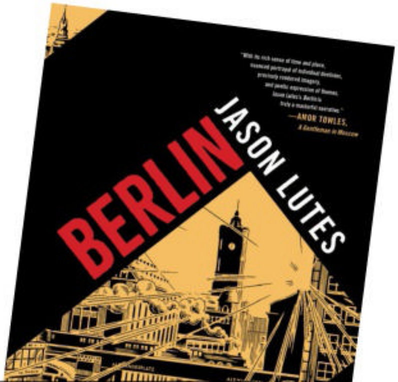
That would be using cartoonist Jason Lutes’s 550-page opus, a graphic novel more than 20 years in the making, as their source material. When collected into one volume in 2018, *Berlin* received rave reviews and landed on multiple year-end “best” lists. The writer-artist traces the lives of dozens of characters in the German capital, including Marthe, an aspiring artist; Anna, a cosmopolitan lesbian; Kurt, a world-weary journalist; David, a bighearted Jewish teen; and Kid Hogan, a clarinetist from Louisiana.

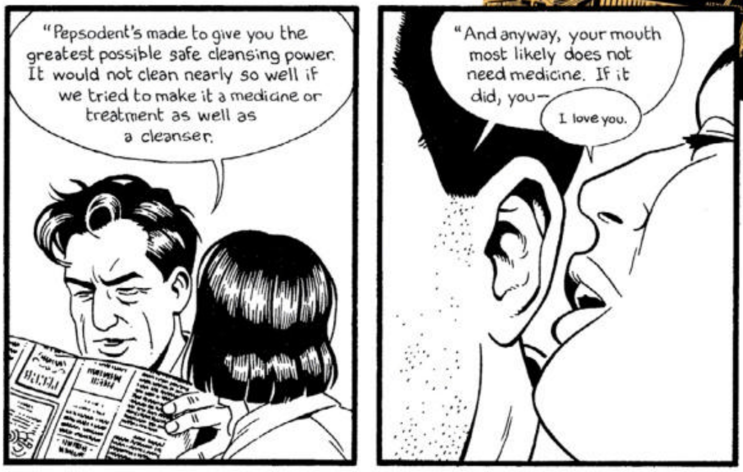
The tumultuous Weimar Republic provides fertile dramatic territory, which is why so many tales are set then. While the Court team could’ve programmed the acclaimed play *I Am a Camera* – or *Cabaret*, its more famous musical version – they aimed higher. “Lutes broadened the lens,” says Maher. “He represents every layer of society, and he really goes into the politics and the divisions much more than *Cabaret* does. That’s what appealed to me: tackling the same very important story from a different vantage point.”

Part of his challenge was condensing the sweeping scope. Five years in development, his script winnows the cast to 12 actors, though the production will still be densely packed: “We are going full steam ahead with a two-hour production, with almost continuous speaking and action,” says Maher, noting that there will be no intermission. Though the production has several songs, Newell describes it as “more of a play with music than a musical.” Adds Maher: “In the comic book, Marthe often refers to the river: The city is a river; her life is a river. That metaphor runs throughout our production as well.”

“[We’re] tackling the same very important story from a different vantage point.”

—playwright Mickle Maher




“Pepsodent’s made to give you the greatest possible safe cleansing power. It would not clean nearly so well if we tried to make it a medicine or treatment as well as a cleanser.
“And anyway, your mouth most likely does not need medicine. If it did, you—
I love you.

To convey this moment of intimacy between Kurt and Marthe, other actors onstage will freeze in tableau.

ILLUSTRATIONS: JASON LUTES FROM *BERLIN*, COURTESY OF DRAWN & QUARTERLY

Their biggest hurdle was transposing the graphic novel’s pages onto the stage. (While the comics-to-film pipeline is well established, that’s not true for theater, *Fun Home* notwithstanding.) Maher explains by example: “There’s a great moment in the book where Lutes does a close-up on Marthe whispering into Kurt’s ear, ‘I love you.’ We obviously can’t zoom in, but we’re planning to use a theatrical device – in this case, the tableau.” Specifically, other characters will go still, putting the focus on the whisper.

“We spent a lot of time with our design team, looking at how Lutes used the form and structure of a graphic novel to heighten the story,” Newell notes. “Our desire wasn’t to imitate that but to interpret it in the ways of the theater. We’re not doing anything like reproducing his drawings. We’ll use physicality, movement, and design elements – lighting, sound, costumes, and a completely open space – to elicit the metaphor of a river rushing; of trains, trams, and lead characters arriving and departing; of a world in beautiful chaos, both ecstatic and terrifying.”

They say you can’t step in the same river twice, but through this inventive stage version of *Berlin*, audiences get to view Weimar Germany’s beautiful chaos from a new bank. ■

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Shannon (left) directs *Eric LaRue*, which stars Alison Pill and Tracy Letts (below) and Judy Greer (bottom, with Shannon).

The Brutality and Nonsensicality

Michael Shannon makes his leap into film directing with a Chicago-born drama about the parents of a school shooter.

Interview by WEB BEHRENS

IN THE AFTERMATH OF school shootings, the stories that emerge tend to be about the perpetrator and victims. That's what made local author Brett Neveu's play *Eric LaRue* feel so novel when it premiered here at A Red Orchid Theatre in 2002: The protagonist is the mother of a teen who murdered three classmates. She finds herself at odds with her husband and two pastors over how to heal. Now a movie version opens April 4 for a weeklong run at the Gene Siskel Film Center. Directed by Oscar- and Tony-nominated actor Michael Shannon, who cofounded Red Orchid, it boasts a stacked cast – namely Judy Greer, Alexander Skarsgard, Alison Pill, and Tracy Letts, plus plenty of lesser-known local talent, as Shannon explained when he sat down with *Chicago*.

Q: You've directed two plays at Red Orchid, but this is your first film. What made you want to get behind the camera?

A: I saw *Eric LaRue* at A Red Orchid several times. I thought it was one of the boldest, most interesting pieces of theater I'd ever seen. Years and years later, Brett said, "You remember *Eric LaRue*? Well, I wrote a screenplay of it, and I was wondering if you'd read it." I was always fairly certain I had no interest in directing a movie, which looked very stressful to me, but for whatever reason, this just felt right.

Q: Brett wrote the play shortly after the Columbine massacre. Considering that school shootings in the U.S. have tragically become more common, has the story taken on greater weight?

A: As much as it's a movie about the parents of a young man who commits a school shooting, it's really about how confusing and lonely it is to be in this country, which is ostensibly a benevolent place – but underneath it all, there's a brutality and a nonsensicality. That's what I was really looking to excavate.

Q: In casting the film, you relied on talent from your circle here in Chicago.

A: Mierka Girten, Lawrence Grimm, and Jennifer Engstrom – they're all members of Red Orchid. I wanted to show them off, because I think they're all so special. Jennifer was actually in the production of *Eric LaRue* I saw back in 2002; I wanted some continuity there.

Q: The film premiered at a few festivals in 2023, including in Chicago. What was that experience like?

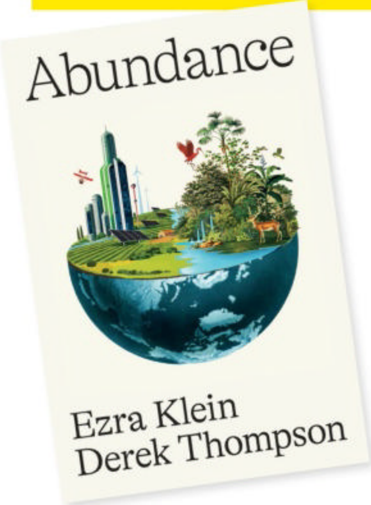
A: To get to see a movie that I directed on the big screen at the Music Box? It's a memory I'll cherish to my grave – really one of the highlights in my artistic life. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF MAGNOLIA PICTURES

AGENDA

Top 10 reasons to fill up your calendar this month

By WEB BEHRENS



POLITICS OF PLENTY
Bestselling journalist-authors Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson discuss their new book, *Abundance*, which tackles America's systemic scarcity mindset. *Apr. 1. chicagohumanities.org*

POLICE BLUES
A new play by Pulitzer finalist Zora Howard, *Bust* begins with a driving-while-Black setup and veers into surprising territory. *Apr. 19–May 18. goodmantheatre.org*

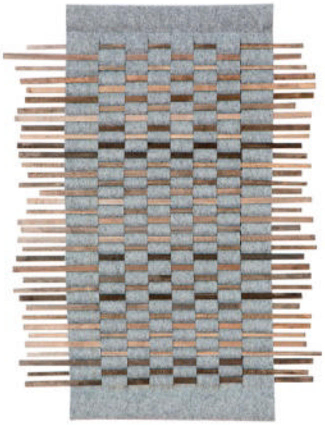
NATIVE TONGUES
Writers Theatre mounts one of Irish dramatist Brian Friel's lesser-known works, *Translations*, concerning the conflict of English versus Gaelic. *Apr. 3–May 4. writerstheatre.org*

RETURN OF THE RIGHTEOUS BABE
Alt-rock hero Ani DiFranco drops into town for a pair of concerts on her *Unprecedented Sh!t* tour. *Apr. 10–11. thaliahallchicago.com*

HERE THEY GO AGAIN
Known for mind-blowing videos, the endlessly inventive OK Go throws a great live show too. The band returns to its birthplace to play the Riviera. *Apr. 25. okgo.net*

GLOBAL ART POP-UP
Top galleries from 36 countries converge on Navy Pier for the contemporary art fair Expo Chicago, including a large new Korean contingent. *Apr. 25–27. expochicago.com*

COSPLAY CAPITAL
Geekdom converges at McCormick Place for C2E2, whose big-name guests include everyone's favorite hobbits, Elijah Wood and Sean Astin. *Apr. 11–13. c2e2.com*



BUILDING BLOCKS
In her exhibition *Cornerstone*, local multimedia artist Yasmin Spiro uses giant sculptures to reflect on architecture. *Apr. 19–Nov. 9. hydeparkart.org*

SAVED BY THE BELL
If anyone can get you to smile through life's absurdities, it's comedian-filmmaker-activist W. Kamau Bell. *Apr. 25–26. thedentheatre.com*

SHE ALREADY DONE HAD HEARSES
The Story Theatre remounts its 2019 hit *At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen*, a two-hander written by and starring Terry Guest. *Apr. 26–May 11. thestorytheatre.org*

PHOTOGRAPHY: (BOOK) CHICAGO HUMANITIES; (DIFRANCO) ANTHONY MULCAHY; (ART) YASMIN SPIRO; (OK GO) PIPER FERGUSON; (EXPO) EVAN JENKINS/EXPO CHICAGO; (*DRAG QUEEN*) DAVID HAGEN

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MARCH 21–
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Jeff Sciortino

Music & lyrics by
Ray Davies

Book by
Joe Penhall

Original story by
Ray Davies

Directed by
Edward Hall

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Bar Sotto, the new bar in the basement

Italian Village's Glow-Up

A fourth generation breathes fresh life into the nearly century-old dining institution.

By ANTHONY TODD

Photography by JEFF MARINI

Giovanna and Jonathan Capitanini

Red Reaper

J**ONATHAN CAPITANINI** remembers when, as children, he and his sister, Giovanna, would tear through Italian Village, their family's collection of restaurants under one roof in the Loop. "We grew up there, running around all the different kitchens, the tables, the line." Now part of the fourth generation to operate Italian Village, the siblings are putting their own stamp on the place by modernizing the business. They recently opened two concepts in the basement: Sotto and Bar Sotto.

Italian Village has never been static. In 1927, their great-grandfather, who'd arrived from Italy three years earlier, opened what is now the Village, the upstairs restaurant in this building at 71 West Monroe Street. In the 1950s, the family bought the basement space and opened La Cantina Enoteca, a dark piano bar with a seafood menu. "This was the place you could have your drink, probably bring your mistress, do business," says Capitanini.

During the '60s, the family acquired the first floor and opened the Florentine Room, one of the first Italian fine-dining spots in the U.S. The tuxedoed waiters and tableside service attracted crowds, including notable celebrities of the day. In the late '80s, the next generation renovated the first floor into Vivere, which now operates as a private dining space.

Now it's the younger Capitaninis' turn. When Jonathan, who was working in consulting, made his way back home during COVID, he started updating things. Much of the building's infrastructure hadn't changed in 50 years. "We had 87 separate light switches to turn everything on and off in the Village," he says with a laugh. "We were still doing paper reservations!"

Sotto and Bar Sotto – both of which you can book on Resy – bring Italian Village into a new era. Sotto, which maintains the cozy feel of the previous iteration, serves what Capitanini calls "new Italian American" cuisine. While some dishes are recognizably from the old country, others are inspired by immigrants from other countries who passed through Italian Village's kitchens over the years or by chef Steven Mendez's travels.

"We are trying to write our part of the story, not being born in Italy," Capitanini says. "I don't speak Italian. So how do we be authentic to ourselves?" The answer: through clever dishes like giardiniera-braised short ribs or black garlic pappardelle with truffle and shoyu, which tap into Italian influences but are hardly the red-sauce food of yore. Bar Sotto, a neon-lit spot off to the side, takes a similar approach. Here, Jared Gelband has created cocktails that sound weird on paper – you'll find Parmesan-infused vodka espresso martinis and Calabrian-chile-spiked margaritas – but somehow work and draw Loop workers.

The Capitaninis aren't done yet. Some possibilities: an update to Vivere and the addition of a deli and grocery store. Italian Village may look a little different than it did when they were kids, but the Capitaninis plan to be running around the building for years to come. C

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Guava colada

Mexican Spirit

For his new cocktail bar, Cantina Rosa, Erick Williams looks farther south for inspiration. By AMY CAVANAUGH

WITH ITS FOCUS ON MEXICAN spirits, Cantina Rosa, a new cocktail bar in Hyde Park, might feel like a departure for Erick Williams. His noted career as a chef and restaurateur has focused on Southern fare with Virtue, Daisy's Po-Boy, and other establishments in the neighborhood. But to him this is a natural progression. "Mexico was the first place that stamped my passport as a young culinarian," he says. "I was taken there by a cook and I got a chance to see his village. It turned out to be one of my most incredible hospitality experiences." Since then, he has worked with many folks of Mexican descent. Cantina Rosa is a chance to "allow the people who have supported me to tell their story."

Head bartender Maria Rodriguez (Virtue) deftly executes the drink menu created by Paul McGee (Lost Lake). For Rodriguez, the program is about "the beauty and tradition of Mexican craftsmanship." She and her team serve spirits like mezcal, raicilla, and sotol (plus surprises like a Baja California gin) and whip up juicy frozen guava coladas and vibrant Desert Spoon Swizzles with rum, hibiscus, and sotol. To accompany the drinks, chef Jesus Martinez (who also leads the kitchen at Daisy's) offers snacks like a sea bass crudo tostada and a chicken tamale with punchy tomatillo salsa.

With his cocktail selections, McGee embraces in particular the tropical aspect of Mexico, which is often overlooked. Says Williams: "I like tropical drinks because they transport you somewhere else on the coldest days." *5230 S. Harper Ave.*

THIS MONTH'S OBSESSION

Great Lakes Tinned Fish

■ Like many people these days, I'm obsessed with tinned fish. A peek into my pantry reveals two dozen cans, from Portuguese squid to Massachusetts mussels. Yet despite living a few blocks from Lake Michigan, I had no species from the Great Lakes. The Grand Rapids, Michigan–based Great Lakes Tinned Fish changed that. "With Friday fish fries, river fishing, and smoked whitefish dip, fish is a huge part of the culture here," founder Marissa Fellows, a marketing consultant, says of why she launched the line last year. I picked up the first tin, smoked Lake Erie whitefish, at Neighborly in Wicker Park (it's also available at Sunset Foods and All Together Now). The product website provides recipes for dips, deviled eggs, and other dishes using the light, flaky fish, but I forked it and some cornichons onto crackers for an easy lunch. Smoked whitefish with garlic and shallot is out now, too, and cans featuring walleye and trout are in the works. I'll need to clear some more space on my shelf. –A.C.

Photography by JEFF MARINI

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IN THE KITCHEN

Honor Roll

FOR ITS PROSAIC NAME, THE STEAK AND potato sandwich at JT's Genuine Sandwich Shop packs a whole lot into one roll: caraway-rubbed skirt steak, crisp fries, silky sweet onions, truffle mayo, Manchego cheese, and an assertive chimichurri sauce to counter all the richness. While chef-owner Chris Cunningham makes the components in-house, the version here leans on store-bought fries and aïoli to pare down prep. Good multitaskers can power through the hands-on steps in the time it takes to caramelize the onions, but for a more relaxed approach, the onions and chimichurri can be made ahead and refrigerated for up to a week. –CATE HUGUELET

JT'S STEAK AND POTATO SANDWICH

Makes 2 sandwiches
Active time 55 minutes
Total time 3 hours

1	tsp. caraway seeds
1	tsp. cumin seeds
12	oz. outside skirt steak, trimmed
1	tsp. oil with a high smoke point (like avocado)
1	large sweet onion, cut into ¼-inch strips
½	tsp. kosher salt, plus more for seasoning
	Black pepper
2	generous handfuls frozen beer-battered fries (like McCain brand)
½	cup finely chopped cilantro
¼	cup finely chopped oregano
½	tsp. crushed red pepper
1	garlic clove, finely chopped
1	tsp. whole grain mustard
¼	cup red wine vinegar
⅓	cup olive oil
2	8-inch sesame sub rolls
½	cup grated Manchego
½	cup truffle aïoli (like Sir Kensington's brand)

1

Season the steak: Heat a small skillet over medium. Add caraway and cumin seeds and toast until fragrant, about 1 minute. Coarsely grind spices with a mortar and pestle or spice grinder. Rub spice mixture over both sides of steak. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

2

Caramelize the onions: Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-low. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally and adding a splash of water if they look dry, until deep golden brown, about 45 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.

3

Make the fries and chimichurri: Heat the oven and prepare fries according to package instructions. Set aside. In a small bowl, whisk together herbs, red pepper, garlic, mustard, vinegar, olive oil, and ½ teaspoon salt. Cover and set aside.

4

Grill the steak: Heat the grill to high. Sprinkle steak with salt and pepper, then grill to desired doneness (about 4 minutes per side for medium-rare to medium). Rest steak for at least 5 minutes, then slice into ½-inch cubes.

5

Assemble: Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Halve rolls lengthwise, taking care not to cut through the hinge, and sprinkle each with half the Manchego. Toast rolls in the oven for 4 minutes. Generously spread aïoli inside each roll, then top with steak, onions, a spoonful of chimichurri, a handful of fries, and remaining Manchego. Close sandwich, cut in half with a sharp knife, and serve.

Photograph by JEFF MARINI

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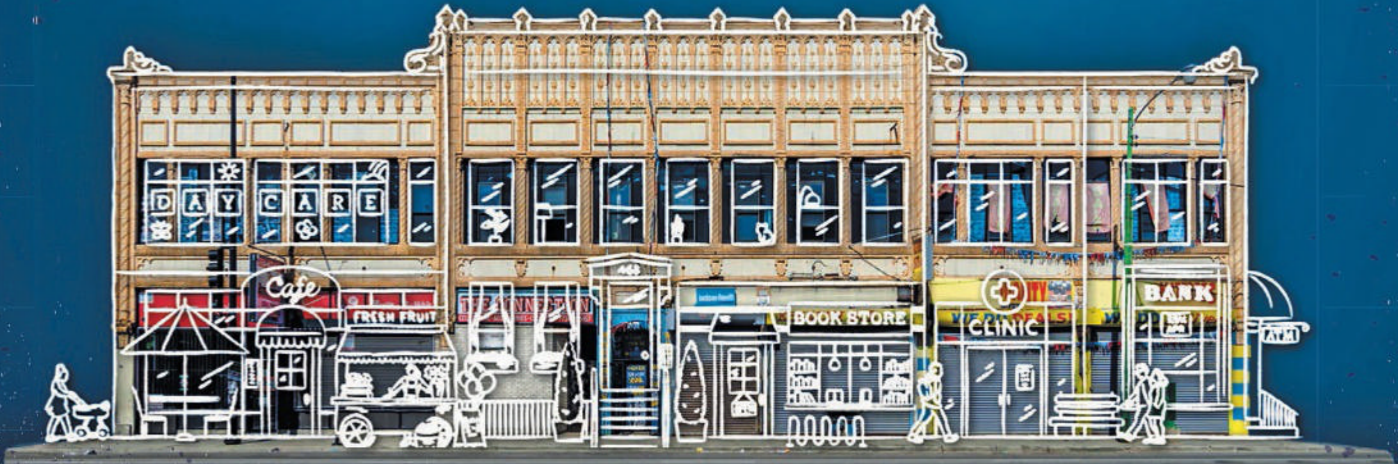
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The Hot List

10 places everyone's talking about (in order of heat)

Milk Bar

Mister Tiger

1 **MILK BAR** **What** Christina Tosi's NYC sensation sweet shop finally arrives. **Why** Try classics like corn cookies, but don't sleep on the Hot Dog Bomb, with all the Chicago dog ingredients inside a pastry. **Where** *208 N. Green St., West Loop*

2 **MAHARI** **What** Afro-Caribbean flavors are the name of the game at this vibrant newcomer. **Why** Rahim Muhammad serves up plates like stuffed plantains and Haitian hot wings. **Where** *1504 E. 55th St., Hyde Park*

3 **NORIKO HANDROLL BAR** **What** A hand roll spot beneath Perilla Fare **Why** You love this team's Korean food. Now try a crab motoyaki hand roll with pickled shallots. **Where** *401 N. Milwaukee Ave., Fulton River District*

4 **CARNITAS URUAPAN** **What** The carnitas purveyor debuts a third location, this one with booze. **Why** Porky goodness with a mezcal cocktail alongside is the epitome of a good time. **Where** *3801 W. 26th St., Little Village*

5 **DIVERSEY HOUSE** **What** A merger between Steep Ravine Brewing Company and Moor's Brewing Company **Why** You'll find beers from both, plus snacks like jambalaya arancini. **Where** *2601 W. Diversey Ave., Avondale*

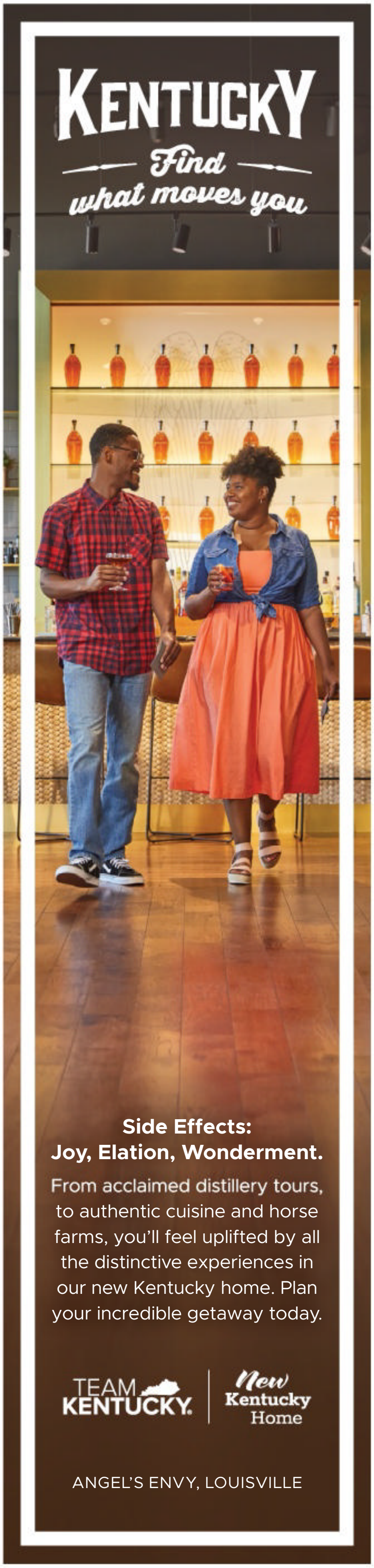
6 **MISTER TIGER** **What** A family-owned spot offering homestyle Korean faves **Why** It's a go-to for bibimbap or bulgogi. **Where** *1132 W. Grand Ave., West Town*

7 **THE STALEY** **What** Ex-Bear Israel Idonije and S.K.Y.'s Stephen Gillanders open a second sports bar. **Why** Catch your fave team on TV while snacking on hush puppies and jerk chicken. **Where** *1736 S. Michigan Ave., South Loop*

8 **DIALTONE COFFEE + WINE BAR** **What** An all-day café that delivers our two favorite vices **Why** Grab a praline latte and breakfast sammie, and head back for wine and a cheese plate. **Where** *1136 N. Wells St., Near North Side*

9 **CUMIN** **What** Lake View nets a location of Wicker Park's beloved Nepali-Indian restaurant. **Why** See what the fuss is about over plates of chicken momo and samosa chaat. **Where** *1039 W. Belmont Ave., Lake View*

10 **LIZZANO** **What** Transport yourself to Italy on your lunch break with a focaccia and spritz. **Why** Drink a Hugo and eat the namesake panini with prosciutto, mozzarella, tomatoes, and basil. **Where** *636 N. Wells St., River North*



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PHOTOGRAPHY: (MILK BAR) COURTESY OF MILK BAR; (MISTER TIGER) AMBROSE VARGASON

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The Mighty Del-Crustaceans

For 54 years, through raucous parties and life's twists and turns, the author has rocked on with his band. By RICK TELANDER

THEY WERE DANCING WILDLY THAT NIGHT AT LATHAM House, the decrepit dorm at the southern end of Northwestern University's Evanston campus. The structure, an old three-story dwelling where George McGovern had lived as a history major in the 1940s and where 42 young men now resided, was to be demolished, as I was told by the social chairman, because the building was long past its expiration date. Such was his story anyway when hiring us, and it sounded reasonable. But reason disappeared once the Del-Crustaceans started up. If you've ever played at a demolition party, you'll know what I'm talking about: People get giddy and the wildest in the crowd take over. Which is good. Good for rock 'n' roll.

As we blasted into "Louie Louie" and "Gloria" – three chords each, of course – there were kids slinging furniture and bashing holes in the plaster walls and breaking everything in sight with hammers and lamps and garbage cans. It was transcendent to be in the middle of the mayhem, screaming choruses into a mic – "*GLORRRRR-EEH-UH!*" – and setting the tone for the joyful and idiotic primal release.

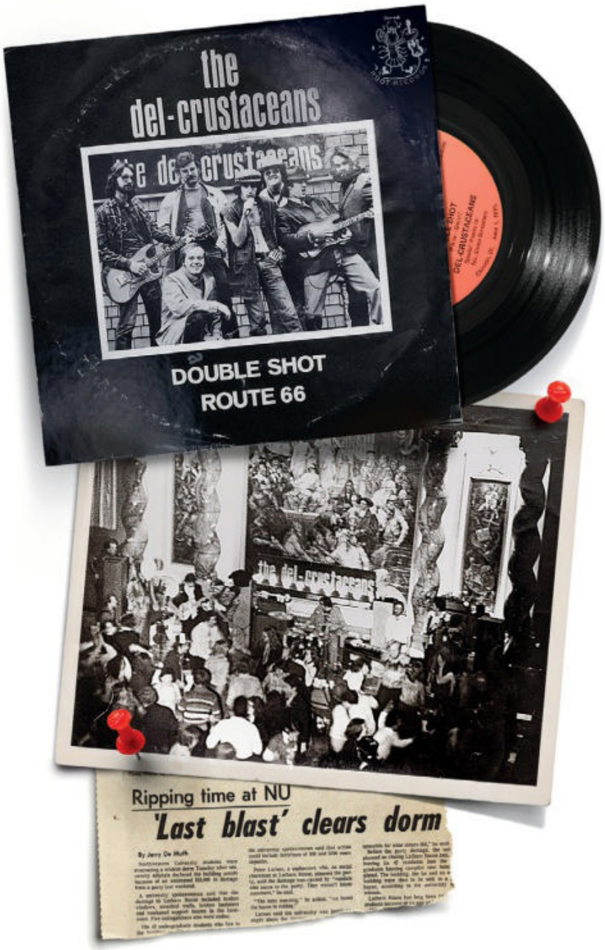
The louder we played, the more fun the crowd had. The more fun they had, the more the walls splintered. In the basement, we would learn later, somebody had been working on the main support beams with an ax or saw, perhaps to get the building to collapse completely, like a rabbit into a top hat, and we wondered if that was the thudding we'd felt, which we had assumed was just people jumping up and down.

That gig, I've always been convinced, was when we Dels made our bones, proved something to ourselves. We were into wild parties. And wild parties, we now knew, were into us. All we ever wanted to be was a party band, to do it properly. We didn't write songs. The best ones had already been written. We didn't want to make it to the top of the charts. The only mountain we wanted to climb was the mountain of fun, to be the Sir Edmund Hillarys of good times.

But the good cheer of the Latham House party was short-lived. The next day we found out the dorm had never been scheduled for destruction but was merely going to be *sold* by Northwestern at the end of the school year. Oh boy. A headline in the *Sun-Times* said, "'Last Blast' Clears Dorm." The front page of the *Daily News* stated ominously, "Dorm Bash Riles NU Brass." The building was declared unsafe for habitation. Student residents were evacuated. Some were in deep doo-doo. We were seriously worried at first – were we liable? – but then oddly encouraged. We were recently out of college, mere visitors, and, as we would learn – since no one overtly blamed us for the carnage – beyond the law. We were free, full of energy, ready to rock. We'd made $150 for the night, and we knew we'd never stop. The point is that this was 1972, more than half a century ago, and we *haven't* stopped.

It's hard to say how many gigs we've played through the years, but it's in the many hundreds. We've peaked and ebbed

Band memories (from top): The first record (1975), performing at the Germania Club in the late '70s, and a headline-making gig at Northwestern in 1972



Ripping time at NU

'Last blast' clears dorm

PHOTOS AND MEMORABILIA: COURTESY OF RICK TELANDER, PHOTOGRAPHED BY EVAN JENKINS

Photo illustrations by JOE DARROW

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From top: Performing at Lilly's in 2012 and a summer get-together circa 1976

Time for an old rock band moves in both directions, hands on the clock crisscrossing with memories and visions of the future, wrapped in music.

a couple of times, members have come and gone for various reasons, almost always because of moving elsewhere. Early on we went through drummers like lint through a dryer vent, but we've carried on. Through it all, we've had, as the band saying goes, "day jobs." I became a writer for *Sports Illustrated* and finally a sports columnist for the *Sun-Times*, while also writing books. Other guys worked as everything from a karate teacher to a structural engineer. Ron Berler, one of the earliest band members, was a writer like me, with his claim to fame being the discovery of the Ex-Cubs Factor, a fascinating theorem that stated – correctly for years as nonsense would have it – that no Major League Baseball team with two or more ex-Cubs on it could win the World Series. But whatever we did for a living, none of it changed our desire to rock on.

We've played at countless weddings, including all our own. We've played in garages, in backyards, in tents, in seedy hillbilly bars, in swinging hipster bars, on a barge in Manhattan's East River, in the lobby of a bank in a downtown high-rise, and at more country clubs than you can name. We've played at the Shedd Aquarium, Wrigley Field, Navy Pier's Grand Ballroom, the Playboy Club in Lake Geneva, the Playboy Mansion on the Gold Coast (loved that poolside Woo Grotto), and the crazed Bull & Whistle in Key West, from which we were fired after three nights of our four-day residence back in 1978, since we'd written our contract on a napkin, and the napkin disappeared or something, I can't recall. There's a bunch that I can't recall. But I do know that almost all of the songs we play now are the same ones we played at the start. They were good then, they're good yet. Can you top "La Bamba" or "In the Midnight Hour"? Don't think so.

WE'D FORMED IN THE SPRING OF 1971, one year before that demolition ball, when I met Robert "Bo" Van Sant and Paul "Pablo" Lundberg in a poetry class at Northwestern in the final quarter of our senior year. As we would drunkenly sing doo-wop songs and Ricky Nelson ditties on the front porch of the large Asbury Street duplex where I lived with 10 to 15 other guys (you never knew who might be staying), playing badly on cheap guitars, the idea of a band gradually entered our dreamy, often-addled brains. Actually, for Van Sant, it might have been his junior or even sophomore year, since he had dropped out a year or so earlier, was immediately drafted into the army, and had just come back from a horrific but darkly humorous combat stint in Vietnam. That episode did not do him any good, and his hell-with-it-all party attitude became the default philosophy of the young Del-Crustaceans.

That summer we added a couple of friends to our new venture, this alleged band, which had yet to play anywhere or have a set list or electrified equipment. First we brought in Tom "Gabby" Gavin, who played bass in the Beta Theta Pi fraternity band. Then we added Berler, whom we knew from Chicken Unknown, an absurdist trio that had recently played, or rather screamed, at a party in the front room of our duplex for $10. He joined Bo on lead vocals. We did have a name, which came together for Bo and me after a night of strenuous, alcohol-fueled front-porch singing. There were bands with weird monikers back then like Strawberry Alarm Clock and Crazy Elephant. But we felt more in tune with Dick Dale & His Del-Tones and the Delfonics and the Del-Vikings. And then there were the Ovations, the Temptations, the Hesitations, even a '60s gospel group called the Inspirations. "Del" and "Crustaceans" was our synthesis. Soon we painted "Mighty

Mighty Del-Crustaceans" on the wall of Graceland Cemetery facing the L, a carefully crafted bit of graffiti we'd later find out was believed by commuters and city officials to be the name of a new street gang. We also painted our name in Day-Glo pink on a four-by-eight-foot piece of plywood mounted on wooden stands and lit by black light bulbs, all of which we intended to carry to every gig and set up behind us. Which we did.

Back to personnel. At last we found a drummer who didn't disappear on us: the excitable Jack Lau, who kept the beat we needed and loved fun times as much as we did. He played with his sticks reversed, creating a snare drum rimshot blast so sharp and tom-toms so deafening that I wear hearing aids now largely because of that. Drew Hannah, a quality guitarist, joined from a band called Lucky Mud, and we added Mike McDonnell, bearded and calm and philosophical, on keyboards. Peter "Coach" Johnson, a.k.a. the Dancing Codpiece, stepped aboard as our hybrid singer-"dancer," and though he's now a distinguished business professor at Fordham University, to me he's still the guy who sings behind mirrored shades and kneels down at the end of "Stand by Me," overwhelmed with emotion as we drape a cape over his shoulders and gently lead him offstage, à la James Brown and his handlers.

When I say the 54 years of playing in this band have flown by, I'm not just resorting to cliché. I mean it. I just turned 76. I often say I still feel like a 22-year-old but one who's been in a fight. And yet time for an old rock band moves in both directions, hands on the clock crisscrossing with memories and visions of the future, wrapped in music. All those gigs in so many places. Like in 2010, when we played with blues legend Lonnie Brooks at a Wrigleyville bar, backing him on "Hey Bartender" and "Sweet Home Chicago." Bill Murray showed up in 2008 to sing "Honky Tonk Women" and "Hang On Sloopy" with us at the Cubby Bear. At Lilly's on North Lincoln we played nine straight New Year's Eves, from 2010 to 2018, and a couple of times cast members from *Million Dollar Quartet*, playing at the nearby Apollo Theater, stopped in to sing Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis songs with us. We sometimes would play from 8 p.m. until the 2 a.m. closing time. Your hand would cramp, your back would ache, your voice would crack, but the last thing you wanted to do was stop. The joy might end, and the dancers out front might never return, and the moment, like a shout down a busy street, might vanish as if it never were.

It was the simplicity of the early rockers that motivated us, those of the late '50s and early '60s whose tunes had only a few chords that an untalented but enthusiastic guy like me could copy. Catching shows in Chicago, at the Quiet Knight and blues clubs like Theresa's Lounge and the Checkerboard Lounge on the South Side and at Kingston Mines and B.L.U.E.S. on the North Side, was a first-rate education. Among the lessons: that a Fender Reverb is a great amp, that a Stratocaster is worth spending 600 bucks on, that Shure microphones are dependable even after a beer shower. I learned how to play "Matchbox" by standing three feet in front of Carl Perkins at Biddy Mulligan's on Sheridan Road, just off Howard Street, with hardly anybody else in attendance – studying his every motion, the way he hit the open A chord and then the low E string for rhythm, and I could see the messed-up finger on his left hand, the one he told us he'd stuck in an electric fan.

At our most impressionable time there were, of course, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Who, the Beach Boys – performers not a whole lot older than us who were in real bands they formed themselves, not fake ones created by producers or agents. They wrote their own music, played their own instruments. We loved them because they were brothers in sound. Geniuses, of course. But pals, always. They inspired us mightily, made us want to be like them, at least on Saturday nights at graduation parties and bar bashes.

We started at the bottom, naturally, performing for maybe six people in a YMCA basement, which I believe was our first paying gig. In time we played for huge crowds at the World's Largest Block Party at Old St. Patrick's Church and at a lunatic series of St. Patrick's Day celebrations at the old Germania Club. Those late-'70s dancing frenzies in that cavernous club, with the twisting, two-story marble columns flanking the stage and an enormous ceramic mural titled *The Glory of Germania* looming behind, felt like revisits to our seminal Latham House demolition party but without the drywall dust. The bashes were hosted by a young John Cullerton, future Illinois Senate president, and a couple of his pals.

Could the Dels really have had top billing at a black-tie holiday party at the Drake, rushing the famed orchestra in front of us off the stage so we could get the party bomb lit? Yes. How about playing at Stubb's Museum Bar in tiny Ontonagon, Michigan, hard by Lake Superior, during deer season, with the weather so cold the carcasses strapped to the hoods in the parking lot were stiff as iron? Yes, that too. We weren't trying for celebritydom. We wanted normal but musical lives with the bond of equals, the whole that's greater than the parts.

I look at the small notebook I've jotted in sporadically through the years, keeping track of gigs, pay, costume changes, musical observations. I spot hints of the 15 or so guys (counting all the early disappearing drummers) who have at some time or other called themselves mighty Del-Crustaceans. The notebook is, in its way, a journal of my adult life. I turn the pages and the year 1983 appears. Randomly: "March 12, Chris Nielsen party – Chris shows 'The Buddy Holly Story,' distributes Pearl Beer." "March 26, Kirkland & Ellis law firm, Saddle & Cycle Club – $1,500 + $400 overtime." "May 20, NU Law School, Knickerbocker Hotel, lighted dance floor." "June 18, Park West, Rugby Ball – Jack unveils new paint job on drums." "July 22, house party thrown by roadie Brett Gitskin,

$350, favor for hard-working veteran equipment lugger. Very hot. Dels go barechested for first time." "July 23, Henrotin Hospital charity ball, Saddle & Cycle. Dels sport Speedos for first time. Picked up with socks, wristbands at Sportmart. Audience is stunned."

So much to sift. Playing with my son, Zack, now a 34-year-old singer-songwriter in Austin, Texas, has been a resounding joy. Listening to the cornball jokes of our beloved drummer, Mike Gassman, a pal for over four decades, is still a hoot. (Example: "What do you call a drummer without a girlfriend? Homeless.") And then there are the wonderful former roadies of ours – the aforementioned Brett Gitskin, along with Troy Blaisdell, Dan Icenogle, and Cody "The Roadie" Festerling. No longer students, now all grown – the first a businessman, the second a retired big-time roadie (Jackson Browne, Linda Ronstadt, Brian Wilson, Celine Dion, etc.), the third a Wisconsin lawyer and doctor, and the last a gentle teacher and career Peace Corps volunteer now in his sixth country, Kosovo.

And yes, in our 54 years we've had band members die. The hard-living Van Sant succumbed to a heart attack in 1986 at age 37. Lau, who had moved to Hawaii, suffered a stroke and died five years ago. Bass player Dave Bradshaw died of pancreatic cancer in 2008. I talked to Dave on the phone from Evanston Hospital just before he passed. "Tell everybody I had the rock 'n' roll spirit," he said. I still do. His place in the band was assumed first by Fred Koch, a longtime Lake Bluff friend from the Hellhounds, and now by Giray Emsun, the pride of Antioch.

"WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO STOP?" PEOple ask us. Why would we? The end will come when it wants, indifferent to our whims, with the deep silence of forever.

COVID was a gut punch to everything the Dels love. For over two years we didn't play at all. But by 2023 we got active again, spurred on, as usual, by lead guitarist Ron Stein, who joined a quarter century ago and always pushes us to get out and go. And we do.

The band now (from left): Peter "Coach" Johnson, Rick Telander, Ron Stein, Giray Emsun, and Mike Gassman

But then we took another unanticipated break after playing a high school reunion in Peoria late last summer. Brian Mott, our skilled pianist and soulful singer – his "Unchain My Heart" could make you turn your head and marvel – called a few days beforehand to tell us how much he wanted to play but that he had to bow out. He'd been fighting bladder cancer for over six years, we knew. At a job in Evanston, I'd asked him why he wasn't drinking anything but water and he'd told me he was toward the end of a fast to help starve the cancer cells. "How long since you've eaten?" I asked. "Two weeks so far," he said.

We've got a new gig coming up soon, a smaller one with mainly old friends down in my basement, a good high-ceilinged space where the equipment is always set up in front of the sound-deadening Autumn Plum velvet curtains (the catalog description, not mine), the modern blue-and-white electric Del-Crustaceans sign behind us ("Est. 1971") and photos of the band through the years hung all around.

Brian won't be with us. His wife, Cathy, will drive in from Madison. A couple of us visited Brian up there after that Peoria gig. He had said to come quickly since he was done taking chemo and hassling with any of that crap, and he'd been told he would likely get a little goofy as his liver failed, maybe not remember too much. We came and sat in his living room, the heat way up because he felt chilled, the way cancer patients often do, and he said he'd had a good life, was at peace. And then he rose weakly from the prone position, his skin already turning a flaxen pastel, closed his eyes, and once more belted out "Stormy Monday" as Stein played the bluesy guitar chords on the acoustic he'd brought along.

Brian's now with our other bandmates who left the stage early. In their way, they all said goodbye and to keep rockin', knowing we'd be trailing along when our songs were done, too. I hugged Brian one last time, trying not to cry, and said, "I'll see you soon enough, my friend." He smiled and answered, "They say time doesn't exist up there."

Now it was my turn to smile. At least I think I smiled.

"Right away, then," I said. Right away. Just a few more gigs is all.

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The Best New Restaurants

THESE 11 NEWCOMERS ARE MAKING THEIR MARK ON CHICAGO'S DINING SCENE WITH UNEXPECTED FLAVORS AND BOLD CONCEPTS.

By JOHN KESSLER
Photography by LUCY HEWETT and JEFF MARINI

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Chris Jung of Maxwells Trading

1

Maxwells Trading

1516 W. CARROLL AVE.
WEST TOWN

Stuffed pappardelle

Erling Wu-Bower

Pear and Taleggio tortelloni

Fifteen months in, Maxwells Trading has reached its "late adolescence," in the words of chef and co-owner Erling Wu-Bower. When he and his team opened the ambitious spot, they ignored a lot of conventional wisdom and dining tropes, and as a result, its infancy was a handful. Wu-Bower (Avec, Pacific Standard Time) and executive chef Chris Jung (PST, Momotaro) wanted the menu to hold a mirror up to Chicago in all its multicultural variety and messy excellence. In particular, they leaned into their Asian heritage (Chinese and Korean, respectively) to create technique-heavy dishes, like claypot rice cooked over an open flame and pompano in Cantonese egg sauce, served alongside ones that skewed classic French and red-sauce Italian. Early on, the food was mostly very good but also uneven. If the rice was a little sticky or if a spicy Thai curry sweet potato seemed forlorn next to lamb Bolognese, you chalked it up to growing pains.

Creating dishes usually prepared in woks and over open flames in street stalls in a standard restaurant space had proved more problematic than anticipated. "The hardest part was a physical figuring out of the kitchen," says Wu-Bower. They began to look at menu items as problems to be solved. They learned to parcook the claypot rice and to poach fish fillets skin side down in dashi to recreate the profound flavor of a bones-and-eyes whole steamed fish. They tweaked the menu so the dishes played better together. These days you sense a low-key brilliance afoot as they develop the kinds of techniques and flavor profiles that other chefs will soon enough emulate. One prime example: a helix of stuffed pappardelle filled with leeks and set atop crawfish étouffée.

This is complemented nicely by a beverage program, headed by Kristina Magro, that understands today's cocktail and wine zeitgeist. You can sit at the bar with a gorgeous 50-50 martini while enjoying the sounds of *Dusty in Memphis* spinning on the Technics turntable, or you can let Magro or Wu-Bower, who relishes his role as a wine steward, turn you on to a bottle that not only jibes with the flavors but appeals to both natural wine enthusiasts and traditionalists. All of which makes Maxwells Trading my favorite new restaurant. I look forward to watching it grow up.

PHOTOGRAPHY: HEWETT

Prosciutto and gnocco fritto

2

Mariscos San Pedro

1227 W. 18TH ST.
PILSEN

There are plenty of Mexican marisquerías around town, and they generally offer some combo of ceviches, tacos, tostadas, and big platters of fried fish for the table. Mariscos San Pedro does all of this and more, staying true to form while infusing the menu with a no-boundaries roster of creative dishes that wander deliciously off script. You'd expect no less from the trio of chefs behind this venture: Marcos Ascencio, the driving force at the late, lamented Taqueria Chingón; Oliver Poilevey, a scion of the Le Bouchon family who opened 2022's best new restaurant, Obélix; and mad pastry genius Antonio Incandela, who finds a sweet-savory pitch in his desserts that seems to turn them inside out.

Set in the sunny, blasted-open space that was formerly the brooding gastropub Dusek's, this restaurant all but insists you ask a group of pals or another couple to join you so that you can try a bunch of plates. Go ham. Start with a tostada draped with fresh sardines over a pistachio mole. Crunch on crispy tacos dorados cradling the French salt cod and potato whip brandade. Then feast on a whole fried snapper to share. It hits the table with fresh salsas and handmade tortillas to rival any in Pilsen. Brunch is even better, because it's here that Incandela's pastries, such as a guava cream cheese doughnut and a stack of corn cakes with piloncillo syrup, shine.

So many other restaurants use familiar formats, like the French bistro or the American steakhouse, as a jumping-off point for originality. Those are time tested; Mariscos San Pedro, however, engages the Chicago of today.

PHOTOGRAPHY: MARINI

3

Feld

2018 W. CHICAGO AVE.
UKRAINIAN VILLAGE

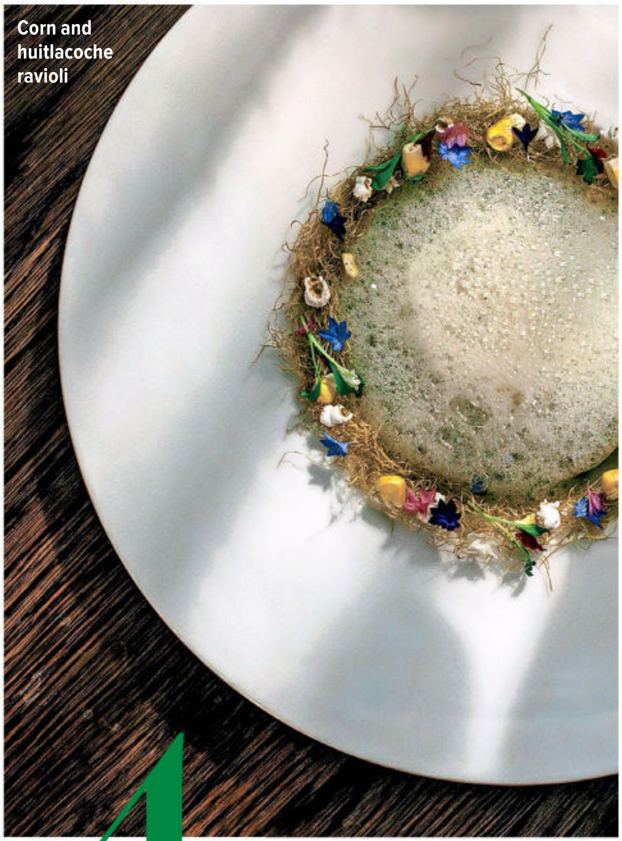
A meal at Feld, like those at many tasting-menu restaurants, is a scrupulously spieled course-by-course affair, daunting in its sheer volume and length (up to three hours). So why does the time seem to fly by? Because – dare I say? – it's so much fun. Jake Potashnick and his team of cooks take pride in their handicraft and stop by your table so often that you get to know them. The theater-in-the-round design of the room gives every guest an opportunity to view the central kitchen and one another. And though the choreography of this 25-to-30-bite meal, priced at an expensive-yet-reasonable-for-its-kind $195, looks easy, it's an intricate dance suite worthy of Balanchine.

You'll hear a lot about a Maine scallop harvester, a Minnesota duck farm, and a Swedish chocolate factory. You'll take the worst food photos of your life because everything is simply presented to foreground the ingredient and many dishes are little more than a blop in a bowl. And yet you'll fall into the rhythms of this meal, laugh a lot, and lean in to taste the loveliest ingredients supplied by the folks Potashnick has chosen to invite to his world. And with new dishes rotating in and out each day, you can keep coming back, deepening your own relationship with this special place.

Sweet potato greens

Jake Potashnick

4662
BBQ



Corn and huitlacoche ravioli

4

Cariño

4662 N. BROADWAY
UPTOWN

Norman Fenton prepares the biggest wow of a tasting menu to hit this town in years at his six-table restaurant, where you feel like you're eating in a fine-dining diorama. The dozen or so artfully plated dishes are an ode to coastal Latin America and Mexico, where Fenton runs another spot, Wild Tulum, and where his wife and child live. Reserve it for a special night (dinner is $200, or $220 for a seat at the chef's counter and a couple more courses) and revel in the technical mastery of a chef at the peak of his craft and in flavors that can tug at your heart like a canción ranchera. If you melt in the presence of Fenton's plump corn and huitlacoche ravioli set in a cumulus of fried corn silk, you won't be the first. That said, the best move is to snag one of the seven counter seats for Cariño's 10 p.m. taco omakase ($125 with two drinks)—it's a fast-moving and novel meal that celebrates the house's remarkable fresh masa, which starts with dried heirloom corn. Look for a blue corn tetela, a lamb tartare tostada, a quesadilla buried under shaved truffles, and a trio of unforgettable tacos. The suadero, made with beef belly and a dab of salsa verde, is the simplest and by far the best bite of the evening.

Beef lu rou fan

5

Minyoli

5420 N. CLARK ST.
ANDERSONVILLE

When more than a million members of the Kuomintang party retreated to Taiwan at the end of China's civil war in the late 1940s, they brought with them a taste for hearty soups from the north, spices from Sichuan, and soup dumplings from Shanghai. In the modest noodle shops of the villages and urban quarters that soon sprang up, a new Chinese fusion cuisine was born. Rich Wang, who moved to the United States from Taiwan as a teenager in 1998 and went on to work at Boka and Fat Rice, opened Minyoli (named for his Taipei neighborhood) as an ode to the style of cooking his grandparents' generation created as they adapted to their new home. The dishes themselves tell the story, particularly the signature niuroumian, a spicy Sichuan-inflected soup filled with red-braised beef and hand-rolled noodles in a broth laced with chiles and broad bean sauce. There are plenty of traditional Taiwanese drinking snacks (and fun cocktails to go with!), such as corn riblets and fried chicken nuggets dusted with sweet plum powder—for many immigrants, a taste of pure nostalgia. I love Minyoli's version of lu rou fan, the iconic rice bowl topped with braised meat (or mushrooms), pickled veggies, and a tea egg. If you need a guide, search out general manager X Wang, Rich's cousin, who is one of the city's great hospitality pros and an avid spokesperson for their homeland's cuisine.

PHOTOGRAPHY: HEWETT; *PREVIOUS SPREAD* MARINI

6

Tre Dita

401 E. WACKER DR.
LOOP

If money is no object, then there's no more impressive spot than this dining aerie, where you can indulge in great steaks, pastas handcrafted in a showcase lab, and an outstanding Italian wine list where the by-the-glass program bests others around town in both quality and priceyness. (A glass of Antinori's famous Tignanello will set you back $74.) A collaboration between Lettuce Entertain You and Los Angeles chef Evan Funke, Tre Dita looks like the fanciest Tuscan steakhouse in Wakanda. Designed by London's David Collins Studio, this dynamic space is amber toned and leathery here, soaring and futuristic there, with views of the lake and river. While pastas can be uneven, I liked a bowlful of spinach gnudi bobbing in brodo, and I *loved* a hard-seared rare filet with a glass of aged Barbaresco. Reservations are tough, but the full menu is available at the first-come, first-served bar, including a bistecca alla Fiorentina that's "three fingers" thick, giving the restaurant its name. (It looks smashing, but we chose not to shell out the $290 for it, particularly when the filet is a deal at $59.) If you do book the dining room, ask for corner table 205 for a view more breathtaking than the prices.

Tortelli di patate and filet mignon

Tyler Hudec and Dani Kaplan

7

Void

2937 N. MILWAUKEE AVE.
AVONDALE

Peanut butter gelato and raspberry sorbet

When I moved to the Midwest nine years ago, I learned there was a certain kind of easy-to-overlook restaurant in these parts that registers as cool. It's partly old-school Italian American, partly Wisconsin supper club, and partly dive bar. Such places usually develop their swagger over time, acquiring knickknacks and favorite menu items over the decades it takes for a lived-in patina to settle over the room. But friends and partners Pat Ray, Dani Kaplan, and Tyler Hudec saw the ready-made potential for just such a joint in Moe's Tavern, a venerable watering hole with a 22-seat bar extending nearly the length of the deep room. They apparently raided David Lynch's favorite thrift shop to bring in such items as Tiffany lampshades, straw-covered fiascoes for candles, and paintings of owls, random people, and the Last Supper. Kaplan and Hudec's playful menu leans hard into nostalgia and wit. We've all heard about the Spaghetti Uh-O's (al dente pasta ringlets, tiny meatballs, and creamy tomato sauce, dished out tableside from a whimsical hand-arted can), but the platter-size half-chicken parm and the shrimp scampi toast featuring whole shrimp atop the Chinese restaurant staple are just as canny. Don't miss the seasonal sundaes; the version served last fall with cinnamon gelato and cranberry cider sorbet tasted weirdly, wonderfully like fairground candy apples, a flavor I'd almost forgotten.

PHOTOGRAPHY: HEWETT

8

Oliver's

1639 S. WABASH AVE.
SOUTH LOOP

If you squint hard, you can maybe see the whole "1930s Los Angeles supper club" theme in these concrete-walled rooms, former home of the high-end Acadia. Or you could just enjoy this restaurant for what it really is: a showcase for a talented chef primed to make his mark on Chicago. Alex Carnovale, who has a fine-dining résumé to rival Carmy Berzatto's, can arrest your senses with the layering and laser focus of his flavors. Simple-sounding dishes – such as a roast chicken in a cold herb sauce, a green salad piled as high as a '60s updo, or a plate of toast and butter – have a lot more going on than the menu suggests. The last one, for instance, consists of Publican Quality Bread sourdough that has been dipped in egg and griddled in beef fat, then paired with caramelized shallot butter for a turbocharged flavor. Luke DeYoung's cocktails, like a London dry gin martini with a relish tray and a gin fizz brightened with strawberry, reinforce the sophisticated sensibilities at play.

From top: Porcini risotto, roast chicken, tiger prawn

THE MENU ITEMS OF THE YEAR

These three modest ingredients are getting the cheffed-up treatment all over town.

Who knew how hip your Polish grandmother was. The hot vegetable this year is … ***cabbage***? Yep! Let the charred cabbage with sunflower tahini entrée at Bar Parisette or the simple and satisfying Taiwanese cabbage with allium oil and fried shallots at Minyoli convince you. The runner-up for Ms. Veggie 2025 may be the **sweet potato**, which glams out with Thai curry at Maxwells Trading and nut crunch at Brasero. Animal proteins are so crazy expensive now, which is why chefs like Ryan Brosseau at Dear Margaret and Madalyn Durrant at Bar Parisette are turning to **pork collar** for steaks and braises. Sometimes great dining means giving even the humblest ingredients a fresh glow-up.

PHOTOGRAPH: MARINI

9

Sanders BBQ Supply Co.

1742 W. 99TH ST.
BEVERLY

Set across the street from the turreted 99th Street Metra station in Beverly, this picturesque spot looks like a whistle-stop café. As soon as you open the door, though, and line up by the cleanly tiled kitchen set with cheerful blackboard menus, any thoughts of coffee and pie turn to brisket and ribs. Chef-owner James Sanders and pitmaster Nick Kleutsch do a fine job of keeping the meat tender and nicely fatty under its peppery crust. The star of the smoker is surely the short rib, nearly bigger than a breadbox and wobbly on its long bone – a thing you want to pick up and attack like prey but know you should share. Excellent sides include porky collards in their potlikker and a wedge of pebbly sweet potato cornbread with a caramel glaze that you may want to save for dessert.

10

Fire

951 W. FULTON MARKET
WEST LOOP

This new restaurant from the Alinea Group has set up shop in the space that housed its previous concept, Roister, and centers all the action on the room's centerpiece live-fire hearth, which draws your eyes the moment you walk in. Flames lick the grates, while branches of green herbs, bunches of leeks, and whole pineapples hang from above, wallowing in all that sweet smoke. It all looks like a whacked-out still life, both medieval and strangely modern. Yes, we have here that ol' Alinea razzle-dazzle, but — surprise! — the attractively priced tasting menu ($115) makes for a relatively accessible entry point into Grant Achatz's fertile culinary mind (interpreted here by executive chef Adair Canacasco). The opening menu plays with fire's transformative power in novel ways. Watch an antique iron, plucked from the flame, sizzle a cluster of maitake mushrooms on your plate; discover a fillet of cured halibut under an enormous (and fragrant!) sheet of burnt kelp; taste the perfection of smoked apple against a fire-flashed sweet potato slicked in funky, gooey cheese. It's a good show.

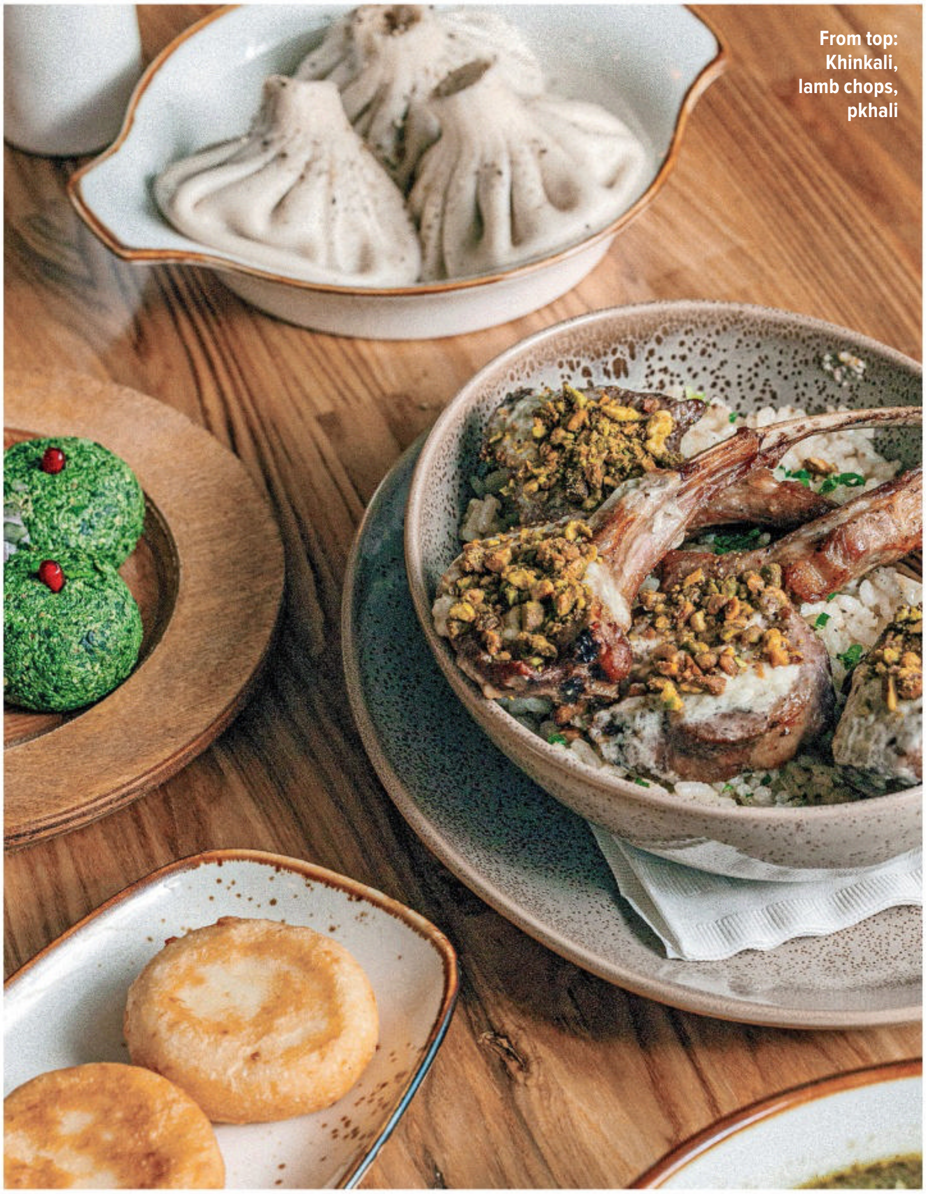
Grant Achatz

11

Stumara

847 W. DUNDEE RD.
WHEELING

If you have never before experienced a Georgian meal, then your first visit to Stumara will conjure a dream: the one where you discover a secret room in your house. Has this been here all along? A fertile land on the far side of Europe, Georgia has for centuries been making khachapuri flatbreads, wines aged in clay pots buried underground, and khinkali soup dumplings that rival xiao long bao for their sheer juice-bursting pleasure. Owner Tamta Sanodze and chef Giorgi Gambarashvili take you on an exhilarating trip to their home country at this smartly turned-out northwest suburban restaurant. While you're there, make sure the tour bus stops for pkhali – colorful pâtés made from ground vegetables and walnuts – and an Adjaruli khachapuri filled with molten cheese and a raw egg yolk to swirl into it. Everyone on board should end the meal with a tiny glass of chacha distilled from grape must. It's the perfect last stop.



From top: Khinkali, lamb chops, pkhali

PHOTOGRAPHY: HEWETT; *PREVIOUS SPREAD* MARINI

The Awakening

This adapted excerpt from Karen Lewis's posthumous new memoir recounts the transformation of the Chicago Teachers Union into a disrupter of the status quo.

WRITTEN WITH ELIZABETH TODD-BRELAND

In 2008, I got a call telling me that Jesse Sharkey was involved in starting a progressive caucus of the Chicago Teachers Union. I had met Jesse when I was on the advisory board for past CTU President Debbie Lynch. We both worked at North Side high schools – Jesse was a social studies teacher at Senn, I taught chemistry at Lane Tech. What I liked about Jesse was that he was smart but not arrogant. I appreciated his ability to put a sharp point on an argument and to press an issue to a logical conclusion. He knew a lot about stuff I didn't know anything about. People always called me a socialist, and I would ask Jesse, "Am I a socialist?" And Jesse would say, "You might be like the European socialists, like a democratic socialist." I learned a lot from Jesse.

Jesse had put up a massive resistance to the takeover of Senn by the military in 2004. The Chicago Board of Education wanted to put in a naval academy there as a pipeline for students to the navy. With the

FAIR CONTRACT NOW!
The terroris
of 9-11-20

Lewis during the
2012 strike, which
redefined the union's
ambitions and set it on a
more radical path

"I had no plans to lead," writes Lewis, who was elected CTU president in 2010. Initially, her new caucus, CORE, wanted only to press the union to put up more resistance to the city's move toward charter and privately managed schools.

ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, there was a strong antiwar movement by teachers, parents, and community members, who fought back against the plan. Jesse was a leader in that. Ultimately, the board of education put the program in, but Jesse's willingness and ability to fight made me want to do better work in organizing my building.

So when Debby Pope, a mutual friend, told me Jesse was involved in a new caucus, I was intrigued. Debby asked whether I would come to a meeting. I agreed, and one muggy day that April, my husband, John, and I walked up three flights of creaky stairs to Casa Aztlan – an important center for Mexican arts, culture, and community in Pilsen. It wasn't a big group there, but there were some familiar faces: the more radical members of the PACT (Pro-Active Chicago Teachers) caucus, which had been in power until losing a reelection bid in 2004, and a coterie of young, earnest-looking folks. With their new caucus, they wanted to center the needs of students, parents, and community organizations that worked with young people.

By the end of the meeting, we had homework assignments. That really caught me. It was a book club too, and I'm such a nerd. We read Naomi Klein's *The Shock Doctrine*, which is about how capitalism exploits catastrophes of nature and war to push privatization and profit, to the detriment of those most impacted by the disasters. It changed my life. During my preparation to teach, I had read Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Between that and *Shock Doctrine*, I was able to connect the dots between the so-called school reformers of the day and the Wall Street fat cats ushering in a new golden age of robber barons that was devastating our schools and communities. We read articles by Pauline Lipman, a professor at the University of Illinois Chicago who studied the effects of these reforms. She denounced the much-touted Renaissance 2010 plan – announced by Mayor Richard M. Daley and Chicago Public Schools in 2004 – as nothing more than a real estate plan concocted by the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago, an elite group of corporate executives with an outsize influence on public policy.

Renaissance 2010 outlined the opening of 100 schools, mostly charter and contract schools, and the closure or "turnaround" of existing schools

PHOTOGRAPHY: SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES; *PREVIOUS SPREAD* E. JASON WAMBSGANS/*CHICAGO TRIBUNE*

deemed to be failing. When a school was in turnaround, all staff members, not just the principal, would be fired and have to reapply for their jobs. The charter and privately managed schools were being opened in mainly Black communities that were already experiencing declining enrollment at neighborhood schools. This created competition for a shrinking number of students. The plan also included imposing new models on existing schools, like the military academy at Senn. It was a vast expansion of privatization, "school choice," and market-based school reform in CPS.

The ideas behind Renaissance 2010 grew out of approaches already implemented under Paul Vallas, the first CPS CEO whom Daley appointed when he took control of the schools in 1995. Vallas had increased the district's reliance on standardized testing, used students' scores to put schools on probation, stifled teachers' creativity, stripped them of the benefits of their professional expertise by requiring back-to-basics scripted lesson plans, and implemented "reconstitution," which became "turnaround" under Renaissance 2010. Vallas also ushered in the privatization of public education through the use of private consultants and private management firms and the opening of the first privately managed charter schools in the city. After Vallas left in 2001, Arne Duncan was named CEO. He carried the same neoliberal agenda forward in his oversight of Renaissance 2010 until Barack Obama tapped him to serve as secretary of education in 2008.

Initially I thought Renaissance 2010 was a terrible joke; I didn't believe it would really happen until I started to see it in action. I wasn't worried for myself, because I taught at a selective enrollment school that would never close. Yet I knew my sisters and brothers throughout the city were being devastated. Renaissance 2010 led to the closure of more than 100 public schools; it maligned veteran Black teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators; and it launched many charter, contract, and alternative schools without unionized workforces.

> **"We weren't just looking at bread-and-butter issues, we were talking about root causes, and that was different for a union."**

This destruction needed to be addressed head-on. We wanted our union to testify at board of education meetings and the public hearings. We wanted our union to organize massive protests against these policies. But our appeals were ignored. These deliberate attacks on Black teachers, students, and schools moved along without a coherent response from those in the best position to understand and address the problems. When I started teaching, almost half of CPS teachers were Black. By the time I'd leave the classroom in 2010, less than 30 percent were.

What all of this meant for those of us who cared about publicly funded, publicly managed education was that we had to move our union in a different direction. When we started meeting as a group in 2008, we weren't interested in running the CTU. We just wanted a more vigorous response to Renaissance 2010. The stuff we were talking about doing at that meeting in Pilsen reminded me of my student activism days in the 1960s. I felt like I was right back where I started. And then we began doing stuff. Jesse Sharkey, Jackson Potter, Al Ramirez, Kenzo Shibata, Debby Pope, Carol Caref, Stacy Davis Gates, Norine Gutekanst, Jay Rehak, George Schmidt, and other refugees from PACT started showing up at public hearings, announcing ourselves as members of CORE (Caucus of Rank-and-File Educators) while denouncing school closings and charter openings. It was exciting.

We went to every single charter school opening hearing and every single board of education meeting. According to the board rules, you could only speak in the public portion of the meeting every other month, so we carefully coordinated our speaking with our personal days. Then we started going from school to school to try to get more people involved. I think what resonated most was that we believed in academic freedom and integrity. Teachers felt overwhelmed by unnecessary paperwork and unhelpful directives about what they had to teach and how they had to teach.

It was a hard time for public education. There was this ugly, nasty, just totally foul conversation going on around schools and teachers and our communities. Teachers were fed up, and so were paraprofessionals and clinicians. Something needed to change.

When CORE started, I had no plans to lead, but I was encouraged to run for CTU president. I think people saw that I was smart and had a presence and self-confidence. What I did as a teacher and union leader also required the ability to entertain and engage. I've been entertaining myself since I was a little kid. When you're an only child, which I was until my sister was born, you don't have a choice. I liked it so much, I was sure I'd be an actress.

Lewis's Hot Takes on CPS Chiefs

Karen Lewis was not one to mince words. And her memoir is characteristically candid about her relationships with Chicago Public Schools CEOs.

Ron Huberman (2009–10)

"We didn't overlap much, but I got along well with Ron. He wasn't Black, but I thought he was when I first saw him. I assumed his mother was Black and his father was Jewish. I asked him, 'So how come you're so Black?' He said, 'No, we're just Israelis.' "

Jean-Claude Brizard (2011–12)

"I told JC, 'Look, in Chicago, you need to make alliances with real people, not just the elite. Because the elite in Chicago don't send their children to public schools.' … But he seemed to be enamored of the position. The white folks called him the 'premiere CEO' because he was always going to the openings of shows or showing up at this, that, and the other thing."

Barbara Byrd-Bennett (2012–15)

"We got along. Two middle-aged sisters, you know?"

Forrest Claypool (2015–17)

"God, I hate him. I never hated CEOs before, but I couldn't stand him."

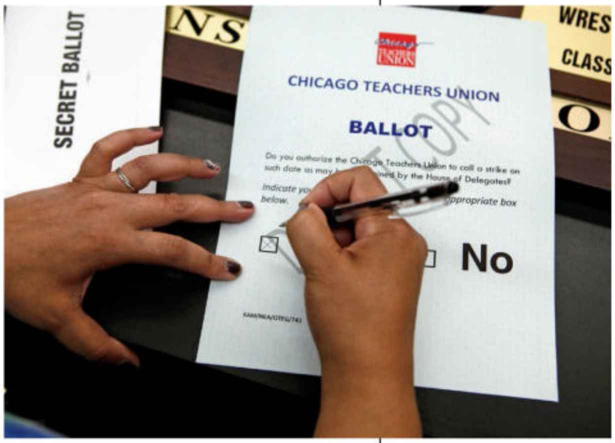
At first, the American Federation of Teachers was very wary of CORE. When we won the 2010 CTU election, AFT President Randi Weingarten and Mark Richard, her right-hand man and counsel, immediately came to Chicago to see who we were. I called Mark "Mr. Wolf" because he reminded me of the Harvey Keitel character in *Pulp Fiction*. We had a Thai dinner around my dining room table. Mr. Wolf was sizing us up, trying to convince us of his own movement bona fides ("I worked with César Chávez," etc.), and at the same time trying to figure out if we were going to go on the attack against Randi and the rest of the AFT establishment – if we just wanted to burn the whole place down. But once they realized we weren't ridiculous, they wanted to work with us. They saw we had a winning strategy and that the other locals could learn something from us.

My first day of work as CTU president was July 1. The whole month of June had been very difficult for me. I struggled to adjust to the fact that I was leaving behind one of the best jobs I'd ever had, as a high school teacher making a difference in teenagers' lives. As my husband pulled the car off of Lake Shore Drive at Wacker to take me to the CTU offices in the Merchandise Mart, I started crying and said, "Turn the car around. This is a mistake. I have no idea what I'm supposed to do." I always felt like I was the least responsible person out of everyone I knew. My husband wouldn't even let me have a dog because he said I wasn't not responsible enough. And now I was thrust into this position. John consoled me, saying, "You'll be fine, baby. Don't worry."

I walked into the office of the president, where the most amazing woman sat at a curved peninsula. Audrey May was the executive assistant to all CTU presidents from Jackie Vaughn in 1984 to me (with the exception of Debbie Lynch). She had a lot of institutional knowledge. It was Audrey's job to protect the president. On my first day, she could see I was flustered and frightened. Audrey was the picture of a professional and poised Black woman. She had been a model in her younger days. She was

PHOTOGRAPHY: (HUBERMAN) STACEY WESCOTT/*CHICAGO TRIBUNE*; (BRIZARD) E. JASON WAMBSGANS/*TRIBUNE*; (BYRD-BENNETT) ZBIGNIEW BZDAK/*TRIBUNE*; (CLAYPOOL) LOU FOGLIA/*TRIBUNE*

extremely stylish, very smart, and could be intimidating when she wanted to be. She gave me two folders. "This is your mail, and these are your appointments." She smiled at me and looked concerned because I'm terrible at hiding my emotions.



Not only were Chicago teachers striking to maintain their raises, they were, for the first time, negotiating for the needs of students, including making sure they had enough textbooks on the first day of school and access to art, music, and world language education.

CPS Students DESERVE a Rich Curriculum with: FINE ARTS WORLD LANGUAGES PHYSICAL EDUCATION
EDUCADORES
C SCHOOLS
Chicago TEACHERS UNION
MAKE ME

PHOTOGRAPHY: (BALLOT) MICHAEL TERCHA/*CHICAGO TRIBUNE*; (RALLY) SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

I sat down at my desk, a huge monstrosity that overwhelmed me. Audrey came into my office and handed me a binder that had a very detailed plan to include clergy as community partners. The proposal was for a program called PEACE (Parents, Educators, and Clergy for Education). It was clear she was aware of the work the CORE caucus had done to include parents and community in our advocacy. I flipped through the pages and was thrilled to see the well-thought-out plan. I asked her, "Whose idea is this?" She made a little gasp and timidly said, "Mine." I looked at her intently and said, "Then you're in charge!" I thought Audrey was going to start sobbing.

Audrey May was the guardian at the gate, and she became a dear friend. She was the Keeper of the Schedule, and she never allowed people to abuse my time. She would interrupt a meeting and start tapping her watch – a clear signal that it was time for everyone to go. Later, when I got sick, it was Audrey who checked me into the hospital under a fictitious name.

The racial politics within the union were always extremely present and pressing. When I ran against Marilyn Stewart and the United Progressive Caucus, the group in power at the time, there was this strong notion that a Black woman needed to be CTU president. That

"I had a signal for when it was time to end the meeting. When I slid my chair back, everyone knew to count to three in their heads, and then we'd all walk out in unison."

was what people were counting on now. But in order for white people to accept me – white teachers and white parents – I had to be smart, I had to be articulate, I had to use the Queen's English correctly.

I had always been very adamant about teaching my students not just chemistry but also standard English, because I knew that they would be judged by how they spoke. My students would sometimes tell me, "Hey, Miss Jennings" – or, later, "Mrs. Lewis" – "this ain't no English class." I said, "Your whole life is an English class, so you have to be prepared." I would not let grammar get in their way. Growing up in Hyde Park taught me that. My parents were strict grammarians. They would get on me for saying "ain't," which was a word I loved to say.

As CTU president, I also had to be intentional about my appearance in ways I had never had to before. I couldn't just be out there in public with a fresh-washed face. It just doesn't work like that for Black women. I'm the laziest dame on the planet – I am so trifling. I just don't pull things together well. Whenever I'd put makeup on, it was either too much or not enough. I found a woman to do my makeup for my first professional photography piece as CTU president. And I was like, "Damn. I look good." Eventually, I hired someone to do my makeup on a regular basis.

There had not been a teachers' strike since the 19-day-long one Jackie Vaughn led in 1987. During Daley's tenure, he always found funding to raise teacher salaries. When a new contract would come out, most people wouldn't read it – they'd go to the back pages to see how much money they were making that year. Since we were getting very good raises, nobody complained.

As soon as we walked in the door as the new CTU leadership, we received a notice from CPS's outside counsel that they had a laundry list of givebacks they were demanding. They wanted us to give up our contractually agreed-upon raises or they would lay off 2,000 school workers. They had a whole chart with different ways to make cuts. We reached out to rank-and-file members of the other four CTU caucuses who had run in 2010 to ask them to join us in negotiating a reasonable agreement. Coming off the election, the CTU was still very divided. My goal was to unify factions.

We also created an organizing department. We did not understand how a labor union could exist without organizers. We were moving the union from a service model to an organizing model to empower rank-and-file teachers to do what was best for kids. As educators, we did not understand how our union could make its arguments without research, so we added a team of researchers. That way, when the district or the mayor made a claim about the budget or some arbitrary policy, we were able to dispute it. Now we would be the ones issuing reports that the board reacted to – not the other way around.

In the summer of 2010, we walked together 40 strong as a bargaining team to the Holiday Inn across the street from the Merchandise Mart for a meeting with James Franczek, CPS's outside counsel. It was the first time he had to negotiate with rank-and-file members of our union. The CTU constitution required that, at a minimum, two officers negotiate on behalf of members, but we wanted to demonstrate a different type of elected leadership. So I put as many people as I could on the bargaining team, across caucuses and across bargaining units. I wanted to make sure there were counselors, nurses, substitutes, too. We needed as many of our members as possible to understand that it felt like the board was trying to blackmail us: If we didn't give back the raises, we knew they were then going to try to blame the layoffs on us.

We held training for this new bargaining team. We explained how bargaining worked and analyzed the board of education's demands. We even brought someone in to pretend to be a board lawyer to get members used to how things would go in negotiations. I also trained our team on how to enter and exit the room. I had a signal for when it was time to end the meeting. When I slid my chair back, everyone knew to count to three in their heads, and then we'd all walk out in unison. It was important that we demonstrated a united front because there were attacks coming at us from multiple fronts.

Soon a new force emerged against us: Rahm Emanuel, who was elected mayor in 2011. He antagonized us from the jump. His entire campaign felt like bashing CPS teachers. It was the same kind of stuff that Bruce Rauner, the Republican multimillionaire private equity manager who later became Illinois governor, would say: that teachers were "virtually illiterate." It seemed like Rahm wanted to just ham-fist everything. He wanted a longer school day, and he campaigned on it. He also named Juan Rangel as cochair of his campaign. Rangel was CEO of the United Neighborhood Organization charter school network, and we were fighting privatization. So Rahm making Rangel a key adviser was another signal that an all-out attack on the CTU was about to be launched.

Senate Bill 7 was already in motion even before Rahm took office, but once sworn in, he was able to shove it down our throats. SB7 steamrolled through the Democratic state leadership in Springfield, pushed by powerful lobbyists from Stand for Children and Advance Illinois. It curtailed the union's ability to protect our members and allowed for evaluation and merit pay of teachers to be based on their students' test scores, an inherently misguided idea. SB7 made the length of the school day and school year permissive subjects of bargaining, meaning the mayor had the power to change them. And SB7 raised the threshold for teachers to strike – but only for Chicago! – by requiring that the CTU get 75 percent of members to vote for such an action.

There was a clause in the contract negotiated by the previous union administration that gave the board the option to forgo paying raises if CPS didn't have enough money. And in June 2011, Rahm used that to direct the board – unelected and appointed by the mayor – to rescind the previous 4 percent raise. It was a gambit to make our new so-called radical union administration look incompetent. It had the opposite effect; it really pushed people over the edge. It made our members suspicious of anything the board wanted. There was constant talk of "weasel wording."

When Rahm cussed me out in his office in the summer of 2011, I was prepared with what I was going to say and how I was going to be publicly outraged after the fact, because I knew he was going to come at me like that at some point. We were meeting about his plan for a longer school day, which I disagreed with because it was really more of a babysitting plan to warehouse kids. He got upset, pointed his finger at me, and said fuck you to me. I cussed him out right back. I wasn't going to have us getting off on a foot where he thought

F YOU CAN
READ THIS
FAIR CONTRACT NOW!
ON STRIKE
WE ARE THE KIDS

"The board did not believe that parents and community members would support us," writes Lewis, shown here at a strike rally that drew an estimated 25,000 people. "We made believers out of them."

PHOTOGRAPH: SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

he could just say anything he wanted to me. He'd made a huge tactical error because he thought I would keep quiet about his disrespect. Instead, I went right to the press and told them what he had done. He thought I wouldn't tell anyone because people in power are used to doing stuff in backrooms. I don't work like that. I said, "Listen, I'll take my earrings out and put the Vaseline on, and we can go to blows!" And I think that shocked him. With guys like that, with bullies, you always have to put them on blast. If you don't, they will get away with murder. And they will *continue* to get away with murder.

Rahm didn't want negative attention. What you have to remember is that Rahm is not an ideologue, he's transactional. If you remember that about him, then you can put all things in perspective. His brother Zeke's book *Brothers Emanuel* is very insightful. And you better believe that I read that muthafucka with a fine-tooth comb. Because I was like, I need to better know who I'm up against. That was something my first husband had taught me, back when he encouraged me to read Ayn Rand: Know your enemies.

Every time Rahm tried something crazy, I'd say, "I'm from Chicago. You're from Wilmette, buddy. You grew up very differently from the way I grew up." Someone could look at my résumé and see that I got the best of everything – training, education, exposure – and think I grew up cloistered. But I was grounded by the experience of being raised by Black parents. Black parents don't take any shit off their kids. But Rahm had no clue. He was just looking at my résumé.

The disrespect, constant condescending, dismissive tone – none of this helped Rahm at all. I had dinner with him early on, as he was transitioning into the mayor's office. I was trying to get to know him and build a relationship. It was at dinner that he told me that 25 percent of kids in our schools were never going to amount to anything and so he wasn't going to throw resources at them. That's how he saw our kids! Of course, he denied he said any of this when asked by the media.

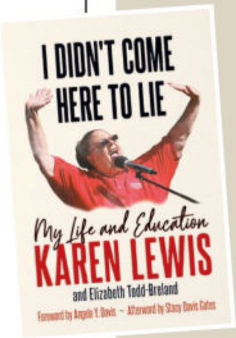
For decades, the mere memory of past strikes was enough to make the board bargain seriously at the table. By the end of the 2011–12 school year, the state of negotiations – as well as the daily disrespect the board showed educators – demonstrated that these faded memories would no longer suffice. Educators were tired of feeling blamed, bullied, and belittled by the very district that should have been supporting them. It was like we weren't being heard. And the only way anyone in power talked about improving conditions in schools was to create more charter schools.

The CTU had issued a report that February: *The Schools Chicago's Students Deserve*. The report offered 10 recommendations for strengthening neighborhood schools and addressing inequities in the school system. It recommended reducing class size, providing wraparound services for students, and giving greater access to pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten to make sure students got off to a good start. These were educator-backed and proven reforms.

A lot of people doubted that students and their parents would support us if we decided to strike. I even remember one of our people being upset that data showed the average teacher in CPS made $75,000. She said that our students' parents don't make that kind of money, so why would they be sympathetic to us? I countered that we were asking for changes in working conditions that would benefit our students – their children. We weren't just looking at bread-and-butter issues, we were talking about root causes, and that was different for a union. We invited parents to be a part of our process and give us ideas about what we should bargain for.

In June 2012, we took a historic vote – one many thought we'd never be able to win. More than 90 percent of our members voted, and of those who did, 98 percent voted to strike. Our solidarity made a mockery out of the union-busting SB7 and its 75 percent threshold. The rest of our summer was spent preparing our members for the inevitable: On September 10, Chicago experienced its first teachers' strike in 25 years.

One of my proudest moments came during those strike negotiations. Rahm


I DIDN'T COME HERE TO LIE
My Life and Education
KAREN LEWIS
and Elizabeth Todd-Breland
Foreword by Angela Y. Davis ~ Afterword by Stacy Davis Gates

About This Memoir

In 2017, while still president of the Chicago Teachers Union, Karen Lewis began work on *I Didn't Come Here to Lie*, writing drafts of her life story. The process changed, though, after she had a stroke that October. Coauthor Elizabeth Todd-Breland and editor Jill Petty sat with Lewis for more than a dozen recorded conversations — at her office, at her Bronzeville home, at the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab as she recovered from her stroke. And when the brain cancer Lewis had been diagnosed with in 2014 returned in 2018, they met at Whitehall, a skilled nursing facility in Deerfield where she stayed following surgery. After Lewis died in 2021, at the age of 67, Todd-Breland made use of personal accounts in Lewis's speeches and writings to complete the memoir.

> **“Rahm thought I would keep quiet about his disrespect. I don’t work like that. I said, ‘Listen, I’ll take my earrings out and put the Vaseline on, and we can go to blows!’ ”**

was trying to rush us into settling the contract, but the CTU delegates voted to extend the strike to allow members time to read it. We decided to push it two days because only one would have made the vote fall on Rosh Hashanah. I remember Rahm telling me he could get *fifty* fucking rabbis to come in and tell us why we should just go do this. I told him it was awful of him to say that. “I’m going to shul, thank you very much,” I said to him. “Now you can take your soul and do whatever you think you need to do with it.” He was furious.

No contract will be 100 percent perfect, and we had to make some compromises, but our campaign was successful. We maintained our salary schedule, stopped merit pay, and got protections against dramatic health cost increases. We also won gains for students: guarantees that they would have access to textbooks on day one; that CPS would add 600 art, music, and world language positions to provide a well-rounded, enriching education; and that social workers and counselors would have access to private spaces to serve students. In the face of coordinated pushes for privatization, the strike also changed the conversation in Chicago and nationally about public education by advancing issues like class size, funding, facility needs, and working and learning conditions to the forefront.

When I was a little girl, I used to enjoy the days when I could catch a baseball game with my father. Whenever a player would knock the ball into center field or hit a home run, Dad would often lean over and say, “Wow! He just made a believer out of them!” And that’s what happened when we went on strike for seven days in the fall of 2012. The board did not believe that our members would stand up for what was best for our children. The board did not believe that parents and community members would support us. We made believers out of them.

Even Jean-Claude Brizard, Rahm’s handpicked CPS CEO, had to acknowledge this. Reflecting on the strike in an interview with the Fordham Institute, he said: “We severely underestimated the ability of the Chicago Teachers Union to lead a massive grassroots campaign against our administration. It’s a lesson for all of us in the reform community.”

Reporters converged on Chicago to share our story. Thousands of dollars poured into our solidarity fund from around the country. People from as far away as Denmark, France, London, and South Africa were asking us how we accomplished so much when we were considered underdogs. Rank-and-file members became the new heroes of the labor movement.

Adapted with permission from I Didn’t Come Here to Lie: My Life and Education *by Karen Lewis and Elizabeth Todd-Breland, published in March 2025 by Haymarket Books.*

>> PHOTOGRAPHY BY DRAKE SWEENEY

>> STYLING BY PATRIC CHAUVEZ >> INTERVIEW BY MARK BAZER

NOT YOUR AVERAGE BEAR

Pro Bowler and NFL style icon **Jaylon Johnson** shows off this season's top looks.

Rick Owens sunglasses, $1,045, Ikram, 15 E. Huron St. **Balenciaga** satin hoodie jacket, $2,250, and long-sleeved crocodile-print silk shirt, $1,790, Blake, 212 W. Chicago Ave.

“

Fashion is something new for me—something I did when I started getting some more money in my pocket.

My fourth year, I got deeper into it, having ideas of different things I wanted to wear. Like when I had on a fur coat and hat—I had seen Denzel Washington in *American Gangster*.

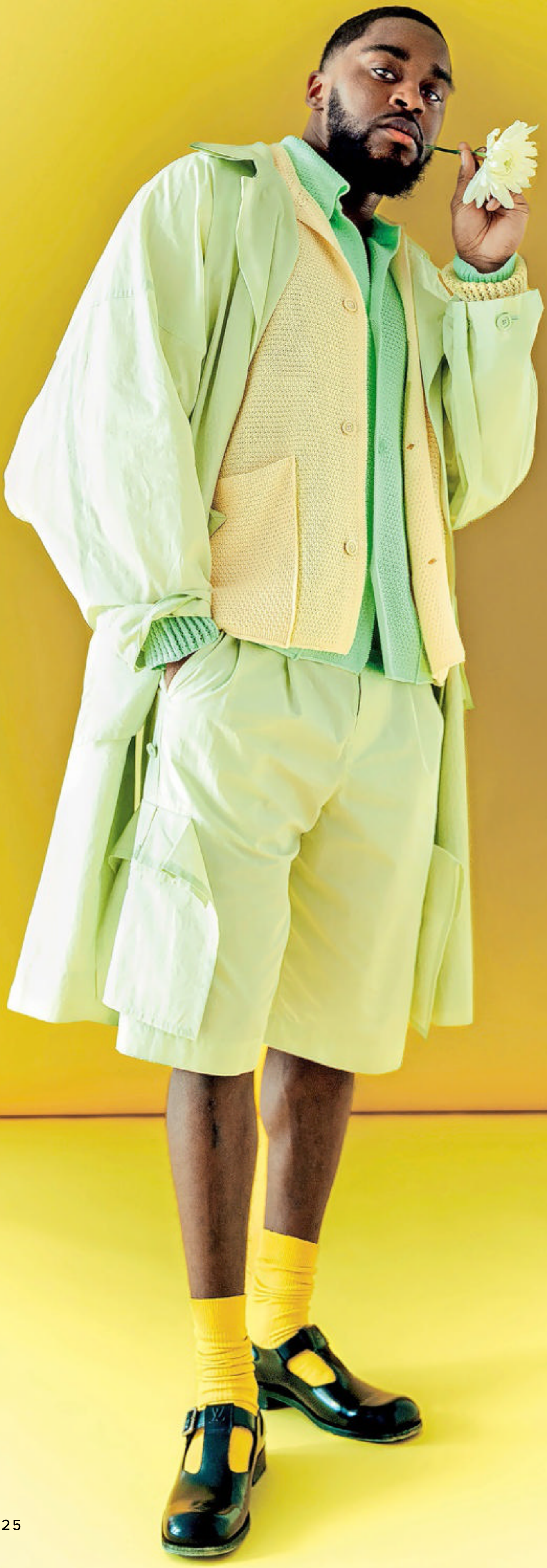
”

Hermès cotton knit shirt, $1,700, and cotton trousers with elastic waistband and topstitched hem, $1,225, Hermès, 25 E. Oak St.

Saint Laurent denim overshirt, $1,050, and wide-legged jeans, $990, Saint Laurent, 11 E. Walton St. **Rabanne** brass chain belt, $490, Blake. Pearl earring, Johnson's own. *Opposite page:* **Tom Ford** suede overshirt, $6,290, crêpe de Chine long-sleeved sport shirt, $1,790, and chino pants, $750, Neiman Marcus, 737 N. Michigan Ave.

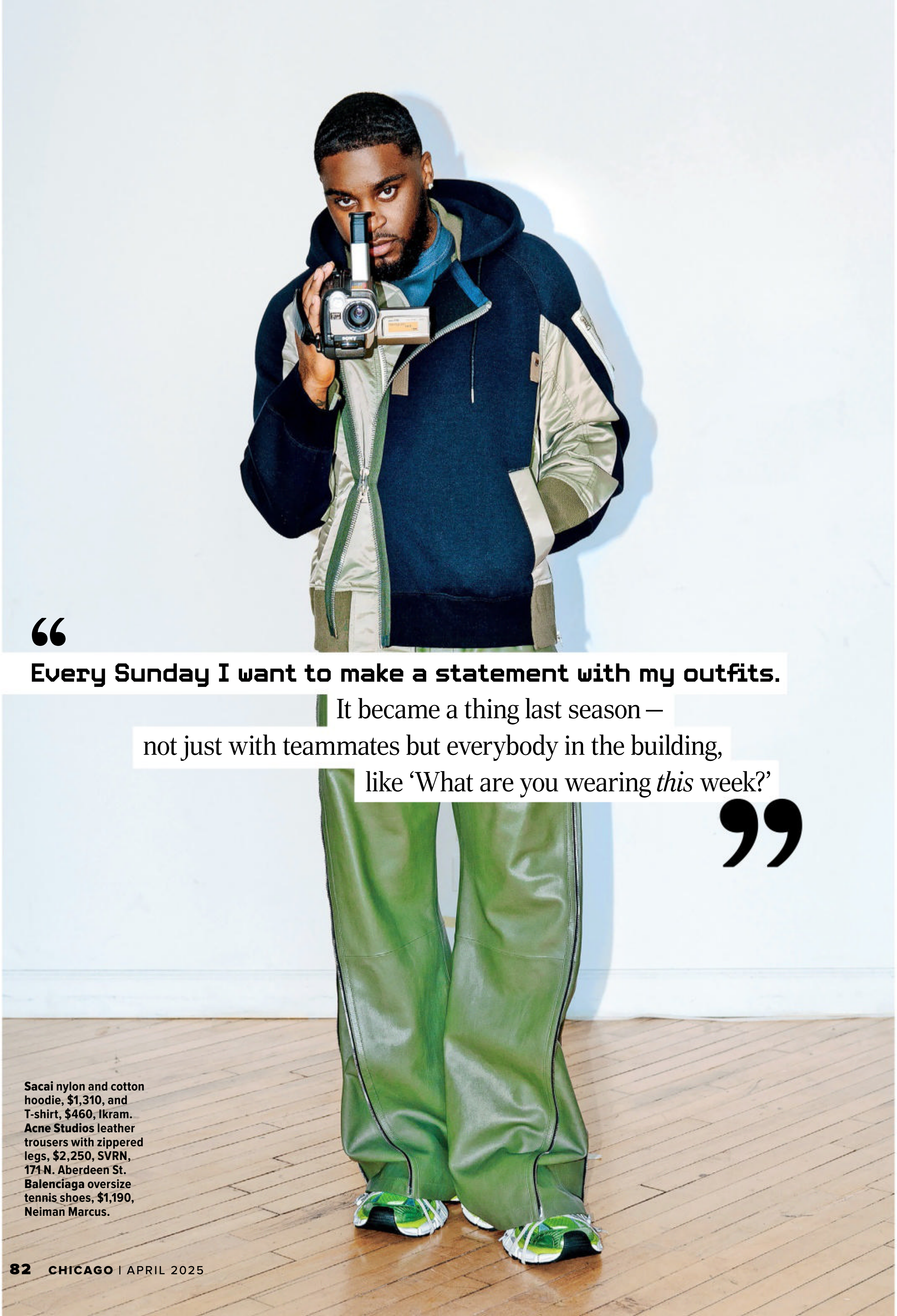
"We had a talented defense last year, but we didn't play to our standard. Some of it is the partnership with player and coach, but at the end of the day, if you make plays, you make plays—the coach doesn't stop you from making plays. **We have to take more pride in what we do.** We have to get that blue-collar, hard-work mentality. I'm not saying we don't have it, but we can take it up another level."

"When I get an interception, it feels like when you were a kid and were told not to go get cookies out of the pantry and you did it anyway: **You got away with it.**"



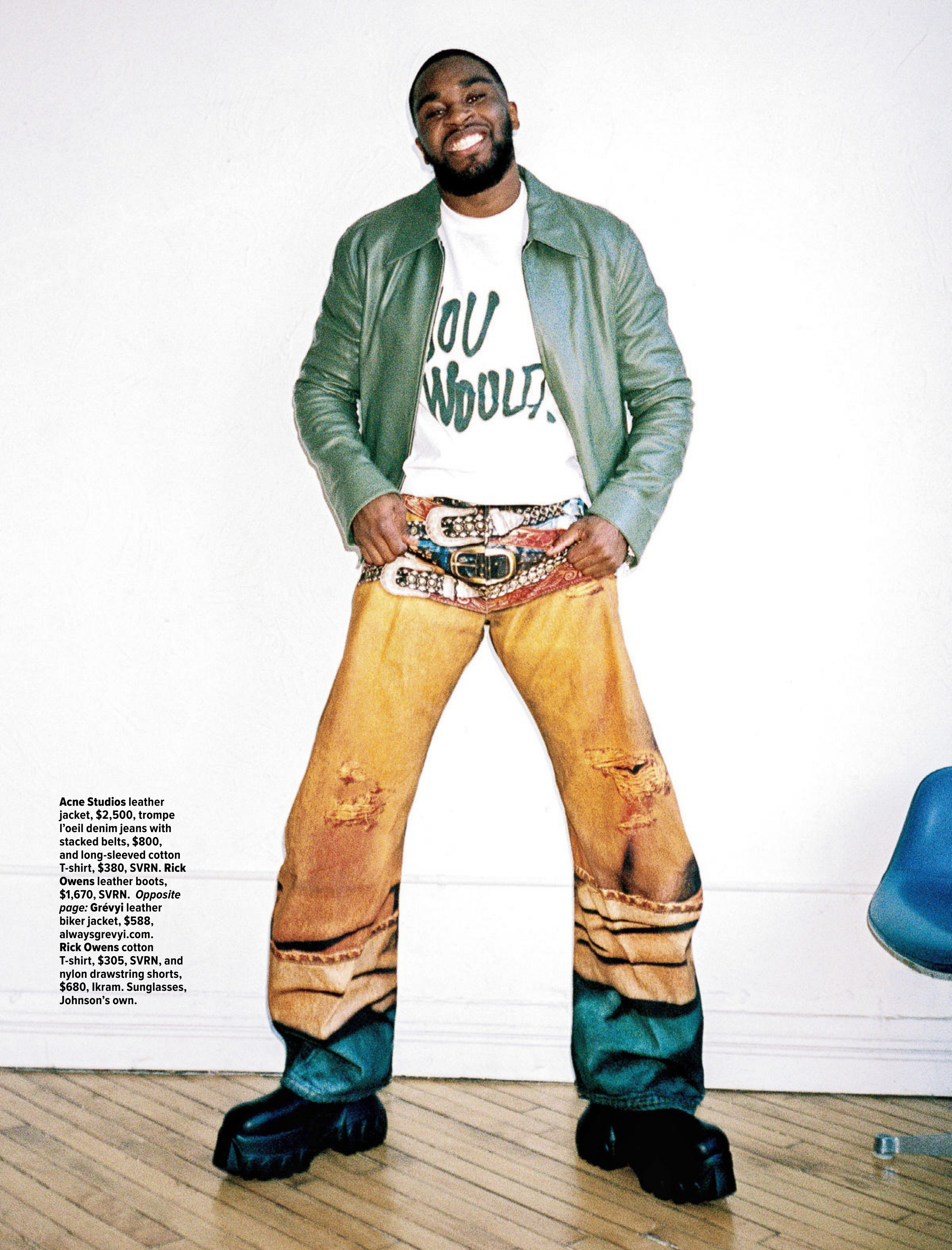
Homme Plissé Issey Miyake nylon and polyester coat, $995, and shorts, $540, and cotton and polyester knit jackets, $850 each, us.isseymiyake.com. **Louis Vuitton** Mary Janes, $1,420, Louis Vuitton, 919 N. Michigan Ave. **Uniqlo** ribbed cotton socks, $4, Uniqlo, 22 N. State St. **Gucci** sunglasses, $450, Neiman Marcus.

“I like to push the lines as much as I can, even on the field. I was one of the first guys to wear orange long sleeves with the navy-blue-and-white jerseys. Equipment people were like, ‘You’re not supposed to do that.’ ”



> “**Every Sunday I want to make a statement with my outfits.** It became a thing last season — not just with teammates but everybody in the building, like ‘What are you wearing *this* week?’ ”

Sacai nylon and cotton hoodie, $1,310, and T-shirt, $460, Ikram. **Acne Studios** leather trousers with zippered legs, $2,250, SVRN, 171 N. Aberdeen St. **Balenciaga** oversize tennis shoes, $1,190, Neiman Marcus.



Acne Studios leather jacket, $2,500, trompe l'oeil denim jeans with stacked belts, $800, and long-sleeved cotton T-shirt, $380, SVRN. **Rick Owens** leather boots, $1,670, SVRN. *Opposite page:* **Grévyi** leather biker jacket, $588, alwaysgrevyi.com. **Rick Owens** cotton T-shirt, $305, SVRN, and nylon drawstring shorts, $680, Ikram. Sunglasses, Johnson's own.

> “When we played the Commanders in Washington, D.C., I went to the Lincoln Memorial. I tried to get a few teammates to go, but everybody already had dinner plans. I ate at a soul food spot right around the corner from the memorial and then I called an Uber. I told the driver, ‘Hey, I want to drive around.’ **I just had my own little tour**, and he told me about each of the buildings. I was thinking about Martin Luther King’s ‘I Have a Dream’ speech. For me, being a small-town kid from Fresno, California, I had the opportunity to really soak in where such a legendary and monumental thing happened. I called my fiancée and was like, ‘Bae, I just have so much gratitude.’”

GROOMING: RANDY WILDER/OPTION 1 ARTISTS | ADDITIONAL STYLING: MISSY CHEN | LIGHTING TECH: JAKE JOINER

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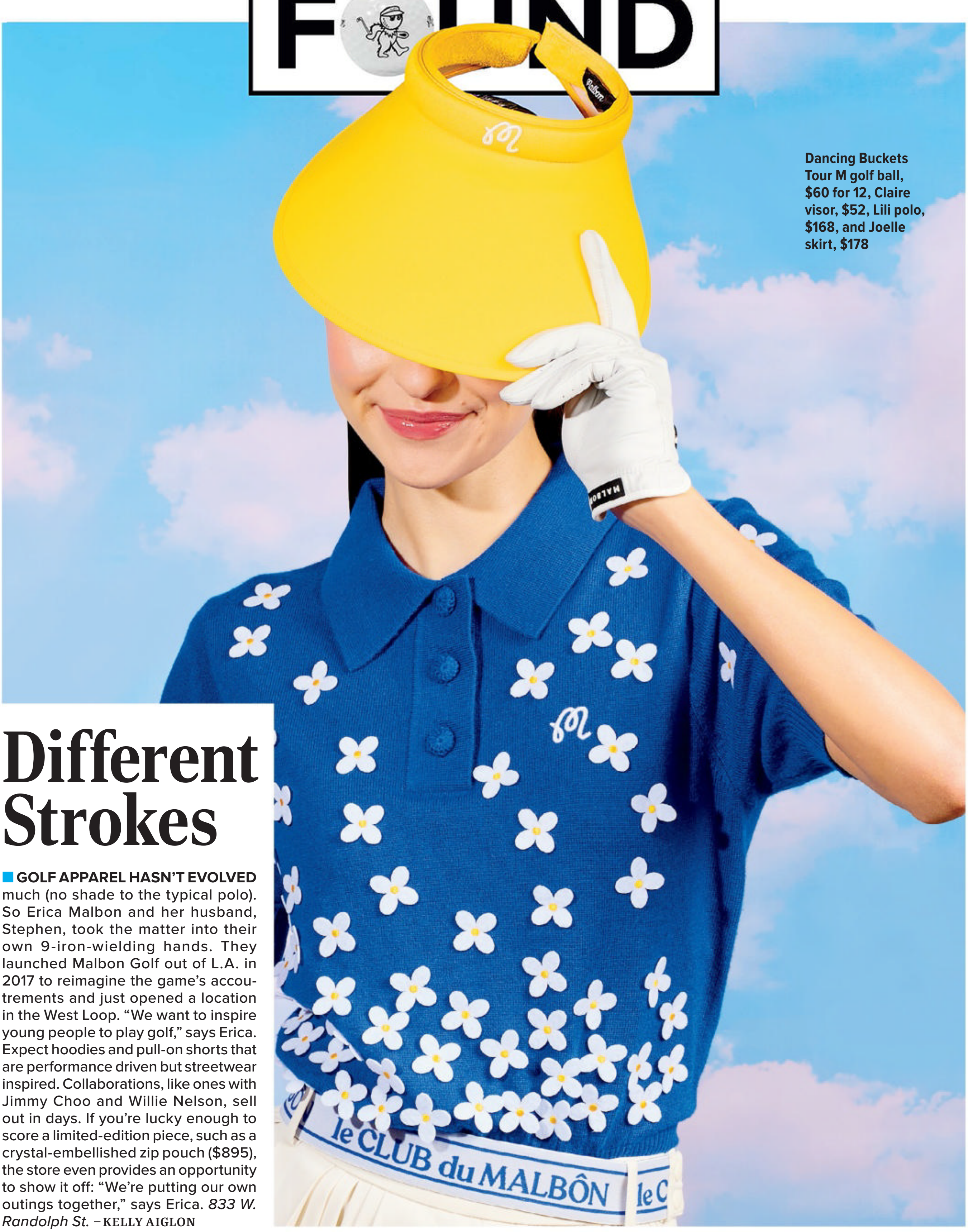
Community Walks



Dancing Buckets Tour M golf ball, $60 for 12, Claire visor, $52, Lili polo, $168, and Joelle skirt, $178

Different Strokes

GOLF APPAREL HASN'T EVOLVED much (no shade to the typical polo). So Erica Malbon and her husband, Stephen, took the matter into their own 9-iron-wielding hands. They launched Malbon Golf out of L.A. in 2017 to reimagine the game's accoutrements and just opened a location in the West Loop. "We want to inspire young people to play golf," says Erica. Expect hoodies and pull-on shorts that are performance driven but streetwear inspired. Collaborations, like ones with Jimmy Choo and Willie Nelson, sell out in days. If you're lucky enough to score a limited-edition piece, such as a crystal-embellished zip pouch ($895), the store even provides an opportunity to show it off: "We're putting our own outings together," says Erica. *833 W. Randolph St.* –KELLY AIGLON

MODEL: ALINA PODAR/ONE MANAGEMENT | HAIR AND MAKEUP: BRANDI KOERTEN/DISTINCT ARTISTS

Photograph by MOMOKO FRITZ

"I didn't know what I needed, but together we figured it out."

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STORE VS. STORE

Aisle Style

We compare two bridal shops that cater to the unconventional bride. By KELLY AIGLON

VS.

Silver Moon

1802 W. BERTEAU AVE., NORTH CENTER

An intimate studio for those who want to wed like a vintage Hollywood starlet

Boss mode Owner Liz Meyer has run the shop for 22 years while styling wardrobes for celebs like Paul McCartney and Aerosmith's Steven Tyler.

Tailoring a niche Vintage gowns span from the late 1800s to the late 1990s. "Everyone still loves an '80s bubble cut," Meyer says. She also has her own dresses with a modern take on '30s glamour (think dramatic bodices with crinoline skirts).

Appointment minded Brides have the place to themselves for 90-minute try-ons. Sip Champagne and peer into the open-kitchen-style sewing room, where a designer needles dresses to your desires.

Secret service The in-house designers can turn family heirlooms into something new. It could be fashioning hair combs from jewelry or making Mom's wedding gown your own by creating a plunging neckline.

Say "I do" to ... a one-of-a-kind 1950s Lanvin pin tuck rhinestone gown.

Belle Atelier

1755 N. DAMEN AVE., BUCKTOWN

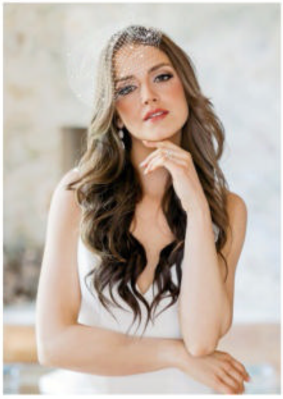
A refreshing hidden gem that ushers in the latest edgy high-end designers

Boss mode Missy Elliott's tour wardrobe can be credited to shop owner and designer Giselle Ghofrani, who also styles the Smashing Pumpkins' Billy Corgan.

Tailoring a niche Some 200 styles include numerous Vivienne Westwood gowns ("She has the most beautiful draping," says Ghofrani). Also behold daring looks by local up-and-comers, such as Sarah Varca, who uses textiles like Japanese taffeta.

Appointment minded In the sweeping raw-concrete space, brides receive the plush-robe-and-hot-tea treatment. Private dressing rooms have stylists who are masters in the art of pin tucking.

Secret service Complete your wedding weekend look by working with Kate Loscalzo of Something White Styling, who has her own assortment of cocktail attire for rent onsite.



Say "I do" to ... a birdcage-style veil with champagne pearls from Toni Federici.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (SILVER MOON, HAIR PIECE) SILVER MOON; (SILVER MOON GOWN) VAVOOM STUDIOS;
(BELLE ATELIER) JAMIE KELTER DAVIS PHOTOGRAPHY; (VARCA GOWN) DANIELLE SIMONE; (VEIL) TONI FEDERICI

CHICAGO
MAGAZINE

SECRET SUPPER

On February 10, Chicago hosted its first Secret Supper of the year at La Serre, bringing together over 100 guests for an intimate and unforgettable dining experience. Chef Sam Rosales crafted a delectable four-course meal, starting with tuna crudo, followed by a French onion tart made with Emmi Roth Gruyére AOP provided by our sponsor Roth Cheese. The main course featured braised short rib and the evening concluded with chocolate profiteroles. Guests sipped on expertly crafted specialty cocktails featuring Maker's Mark, Roku Gin, and Haku Vodka, including a brown butter-washed old fashioned, a gimlet, and an espresso martini. Set in La Serre's stunning atmosphere, the event was a perfect kickoff to this exclusive dining series.

1

2

3

1. The scene at La Serre. **2.** From left: Roku Gin Gimlet, Maker's Mark Brown Butter Washed Old Fashioned and Haku Vodka Espresso Martini. **3.** French Onion Tart made with Emmi Roth Gruyere AOP.

▸ To purchase tickets for future Secret Supper events please visit: chicagomag.com/secret-supper.

PHOTOGRAPHY: FRANCIS SON

Sponsored by

Maker's Mark · LA SERRE · ROKU GIN · Emmi

THE GOODS

Feeling Blue

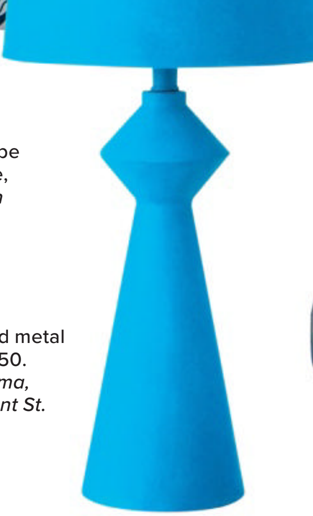
Spring is rolling in on waves of ocean color.

By JESSICA MOAZAMI

TIDE UP
Cotton poplin tucked shirt, $445, and tie-front skirt, $545. *tibi.com*

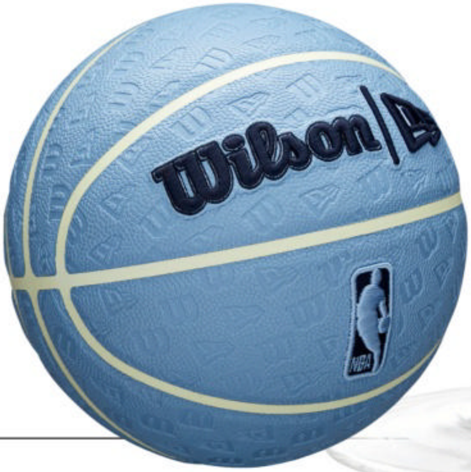
VACATION READY
Globe-Trotter x A Bathing Ape Centenary carry-on suitcase, $3,095. *us.globe-trotter.com*

SIGNET STATEMENT
Ayla 14-karat gold-plated sterling silver signet ring with turquoise and white sapphires, $225. *preetisandhu.com*



BLUE LIGHT
Ingrid resin and metal table lamp, $350. *Williams Sonoma, 1550 N. Fremont St.*

DRINK TO THIS
Vietri Drop mouth-blown wineglass, $79. *Nordstrom, 55 E. Grand Ave.*



HOOP THERAPY
Wilson x New Era Unmissable collector's edition composite leather basketball, $100. *wilson.com*

PHOTOGRAPHY: (TIBI) GETTY IMAGES; (ALL OTHERS) COURTESY OF THE VENDORS

REAL ESTATE PROFILES

Turn to these exceptional Chicago Real Estate Professionals for market advice and expertise when buying or selling your home!

KIM KERBIS

@PROPERTIES CHRISTIE'S INTERNATIONAL

Native Chicagoan Kim Kerbis, ABR, CRS, GRI, CNE, SRES, AHWD, has been an award-winning, top-producing real estate agent in the city for over 25 years.

She brings both a high touch and high-tech approach to working with clients, 99 percent of whom are past clients and referrals. “I work with buyers and sellers and do some leasing as well. It is important to see the whole market, not just a small part of it. Even though the market can be segmented, it all works together as a cohesive whole. I’m always educating myself & asking questions to see how local, national, and international events put pressure on different aspects of the market.”

In addition to being a Chicago Association of Realtors top-producer, Kim has been recognized as a Who’s Who in Chicago Real Estate by Chicago Agent Magazine since 2016, including being voted Managing Broker of the Year (city) in 2019; as one of Chicago’s most influential residential real estate brokers by Crain’s Chicago Business (2018); top-producing individual agent in the @properties Lakeview office in 2016; and appearing on WBEZ and being a go-to resource for local and national news outlets, including Crain’s, Chicago magazine, Curbed Chicago, and the Chicago Tribune. Kim is also renowned for “kerb appeal-working with buyers” a course she teaches to @properties agents.

Kim serves on CAR’s Board of Directors, the Forms & Contracts Committee, and serves on the Illinois Realtors Professional Standards Committee. She is also on the Board of Trustees for the Francis W. Parker School and the Board of Directors of Chicago Women in Architecture Foundation. “My clients always come first. By volunteering my time at CAR I am constantly learning and collaborating with other agents. That information and those relationships help my clients achieve their goals.”

lake effect
lakeeffectchicago.com

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

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MATT LARICY

LARICY-AMERICORP REAL ESTATE

Matt Laricy is a third-generation realtor and managing partner for Americorp Real Estate. He also founded Laricy, a boutique tech-forward real estate team in Downtown Chicago. Matt's dedication, hard work, and deep understanding of Chicago's real estate market have helped his reputation as a top- tier realtor rapidly grow into one of Chicago's most recognizable real estate brands. Matt and his team specialize in all facets of the real estate business — from navigating the way for first-time buyers to providing guidance on the luxury market and everything in between.

Matt's dedication to real estate, his clients and the Chicago community continues to set him apart as Chicago's top real estate expert.

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

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CARRIE McCORMICK

CHRISTIE'S INTERNATIONAL

For over two decades, Carrie McCormick has defined excellence in Chicago's real estate market, setting the gold standard across all neighborhoods and price points. With an extraordinary career surpassing $2.2 billion in sales—including an impressive $200 million in 2024 alone—Carrie is more than a top producer; she's a visionary force in the world of luxury real estate.

Carrie's name is synonymous with success, her reputation built on a foundation of expertise, integrity, and an unparalleled commitment to her clients. Her ability to navigate Chicago's ever-evolving market has solidified her place as an industry icon, trusted by buyers and sellers at every level.

In a world where digital influence drives decisions, Carrie McCormick shines as a leader. Her vibrant and engaging social media presence not only informs but inspires, delivering market insights, exclusive listings, and innovative opportunities to her clients and followers. She has seamlessly blended the art of connection with the science of marketing, cementing her status as a trendsetter in luxury real estate.

Carrie's marketing genius lies in her bespoke approach. Every property tells a story, and Carrie knows exactly how to bring it to life. From sophisticated penthouses to charming family homes, her custom strategie's showcase each property's unique essence, ensuring it stands out and captivates the right buyers.

With a track record as impressive as her passion, Carrie McCormick continues to elevate Chicago real estate—one extraordinary property at a time.

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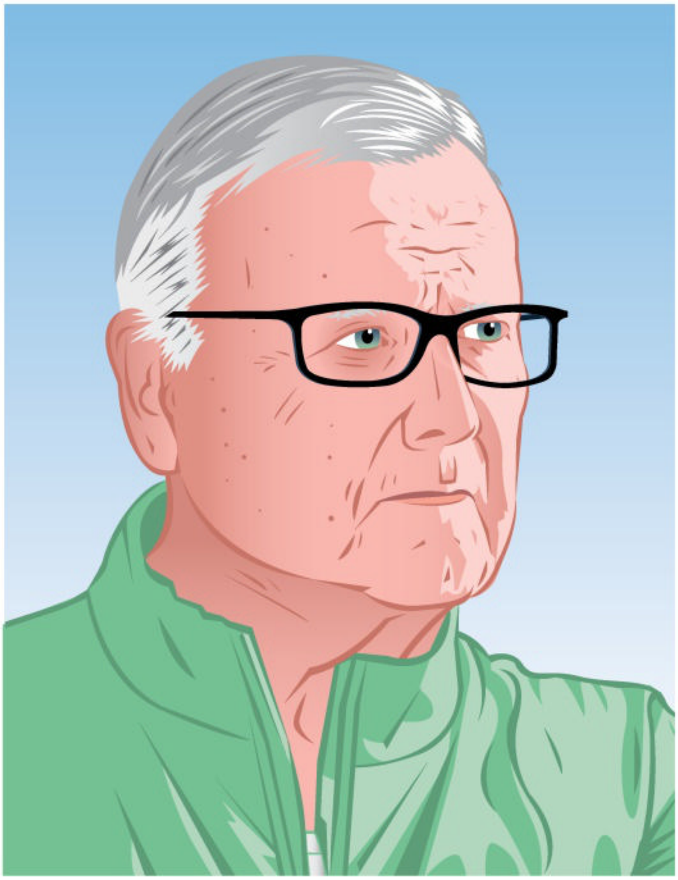

Adrian Smith

The architect, 80, on designing tall buildings, criticizing the Trump sign, and divine inspiration

Interview by MIKE THOMAS

There's always a risk in doing the world's tallest building because it's never been done before. You don't really know what the problems will be. There are surprises that will come. So you really have to understand what the forces are on these buildings and what can happen that's different than for a normal-sized building.

With the Burj Khalifa, the client owned 300 acres around it. They were looking for a statement building that could become the center of gravity for their development. You see that throughout the history of tall buildings. When the Sears Tower was put up, the tallest around it in that southwest corner of the Loop was, I think, 18 stories. But the Sears Tower drew other buildings to that area.

After I came out against the Trump Tower sign, I got a call from Trump's lawyer, Michael Cohen. He said, "The reason this is a problem is because when other people say they don't like the sign, it's one thing. But when you say you don't like the sign, people take notice." And so I said, "OK, I understand that." And then I said, "By the way, Donald must be very happy about all the PR coming along with it." Donald does not distinguish between good and bad PR.

My father died at 57 of a heart attack when I was a sophomore in college. So we never really discussed my interest in architecture. But my mother understood. She had a strong aesthetic sense about her. She was a beautiful woman, but she had a rough time. She had my older brother when she was 16, unmarried, living in a place called Watson, Illinois, in 1925 or so. That's a tough time for a single mother. I didn't even know until late in high school. She kept it secret.

I remember when I first came into the city. I hitchhiked from Texas A&M to Missouri, then my brother, who was a lawyer there, drove me to Chicago. When you're coming in from the southwest on Route 80, the city emerges as monolithic. At that time, in the '60s, it was all stone, like manmade mountains. It made a very powerful impression, and I said to myself: I want to be a part of that.

The first major thing that I worked on at SOM was not major at all. It was the basement at the John Hancock Center, near the little reflecting pool. In those years, the late '60s and even early '70s, I would wander around the office in the evenings, looking at everybody's work, seeing what's on the drawing boards. When the Sears Tower was started in the early '70s, I remember saying to myself: I wonder if I'll ever have a chance to do a tall building.

I am a religious person. As I was driving home one day after a very depressing meeting about having to do a whole series of things to save SOM, a thought came to me. I can't tell you word for word, but basically it was: If God's going to take care of the little birds and all that, he's going to take care of you. And so I just said, OK, I'll accept that. And it relieved me of all that stress. I often pray with my wife for inspiration on projects. I know a lot of people will think that's weird, but for me, it works.

Illustration by QUICKHONEY

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